# "This space is not built for people like us":

# An Institutional Ethnography of the Everyday Work of Students with Disabilities in Nigerian Universities

**By**

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**Abstract**

Against the backdrop of the expansion of higher education in a postcolonial context, this thesis develops a novel understanding of the everyday work that goes into enacting disability inclusion policies in higher education institutions in Nigeria. Through a decolonial institutional ethnography, the study brings the social organisation of policy texts (Smith, 2005) in dialogue with the colonial matrix of power (Quijano, 2007) to explicate how higher education policies are caught in the ideological understanding of disability, inclusion and inclusive education diffused through legitimised knowledge and practices. It argues that the locus of enunciation (Grosfoguel, 2011) of disability inclusion policies and the idea of university education is still Eurocentric, thereby dictating the thinking, saying, doing and being of inclusive education in the periphery.

Conducted over six months, the study is an immersion into the experience of students with disabilities (SWDs) through shadowing their daily and nightly campus activities across three anonymised universities of different statuses (federal, state and private). The study also involved over 60 interviews conducted with students and other policy "actors", such as disability unit staff, lecturers, counselling support services, volunteers, and principal officers of the universities and document analysis of the universities' strategic plans and reports.

The study reveals how discourses, institutional policies, and support services are being deployed to "contain" the experience of SWDs in higher education institutions. It shows that, whether institutional policies and frameworks are implemented or not, there is "policy work" that SWDs undertake as they pursue access and participation in universities that are not designed for them. This innovative conceptualisation allows the institutional observability of how SWDs prepare for, experience and engage with university life, described as *access work*, *participation work* and *transformation work*.

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**List of Acronyms**

| | |
|---|---|
| SWDs | Student With Disabilities |
| HI | Hearing Impaired |
| VI | Visually Impaired |
| PI | Physically Impaired |
| FUA | Federal University of Arewa |
| KSU | Kosigi State University |
| APU | Alenje Private University |
| JAMB | Joint Admission Matriculation Board |
| NUC | National Universities Commission |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UTME | Unified Tertiary Matriculation Exams |
| IE | Institutional Ethnography |
| IED | Inclusive Education |
| DSC | Deaf Support Centre |
| PWDs | People With Disabilities |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |
| UNCRPD | United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| NPE | National Policy on Education |
| JEOG | Jamb Equal Opportunity Group |
| LG | Listening Guide |
| FME | Federal Ministry of Education |

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background to the Study

Enrolment into universities in Nigeria has grown from an initial 210 students in 1948 at the University College, Ibadan, to about 2.4 million students in 2018 (NUC, 2018). While this trend might signal a system transitioning from an elitist to a mass (Trow, 1973) or high participation system (Marginson, 2016), it hides the fact that the student participation rate is still below 15% (Okebukola, 2020). This expansion is powered not only by the state's drive to increase access to HE but a "universal desire for betterment through education" (Marginson 2016 p. 2). However, the opportunities that higher education is meant to bring are not universal, especially for students from disadvantaged and lower socio-economic groups (Lebeau and Oanda, 2020, Marginson, 2016, Brennan and Naidoo, 2008). This implies that the discourse of expansion of HE in Africa hides its dynamic role in shaping equality of access, participation and outcome.

To address these unintended consequences of HE expansion, the social justice and equity literature in the Nigerian context has historically focused on admission quota systems, ethnicity and religion. In recent decades, it has expanded to include class, gender and disability. However, until September 2023, when the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) organised the "maiden" National Conference on Equal Opportunity of Access to Higher Education in Nigeria, disability has not received adequate policy attention as a socio-political issue in Nigeria's HE. This national conference came after JAMB and the National Universities Commission (NUC) took the decision in 2017 to start publishing data on HE enrolment of students with disabilities (SWDs) through the JAMB Equal Opportunity Group (JEOG). This historical exclusion has been attributed to the definitional complication of disability or how special needs has been represented in key policy texts on education in Nigeria. While the meaning of disability depends on how it is experienced, who defines it, for whom it is defined, and for what purpose (Lane, 2017), it becomes even more complicated when we consider the nuanced conceptualisation of disabilities in African societies (Nwokorie and Devlieger, 2019, Imam and Abdulraheem-Mustapha, 2016). As indicated by Etieyibo (2020), a breakdown of the 2006 Nigeria population census figures, which is the most recent census available, shows

that the total number of women, men and children with disabilities was 1,544,418, 706,689 and 1,002,062, respectively — establishing the total number of people with disabilities in 2006 at 3,253,169, approximately 2.32% of the entire population (Etieyibo, 2020 p. 68). Based on the WHO's assessment that 15% of any given population has some forms of disability, the total number of people with disabilities is expected to have risen to around 32 million, with Nigeria's current population estimated to be about 214 million people (Central Intelligence Agency (2020), population estimate). As reported in 2017, less than 0.2% of the students enrolled in the JAMB system, self-identified as SWDs, while about 0.4% of students attending university degrees are registered with disabilities (Okebukola, 2020). By contrast, researchers in England, Scotland, South Africa, Cyprus and the US, report that about 4 –10% of students attending higher education are registered with a disability ( see: Hadjikakou et al., 2010, Gabel and Miskovic, 2014, Mayat and Amosun, 2011, Tinklin et al., 2004). Comparing JAMB data on access and participation with the 32 million people estimated to be with disabilities in Nigeria raises questions on how the inclusion of people with disabilities has been presented on the policy agendas of government and HEIs. However, as Baez (2004) suggests inclusion goes beyond numbers and having a campus community that is committed to confronting oppression and discrimination is critically important. This commitment creates a climate where historically underrepresented and underserved people such as ethnic minority groups, women and SWDs, feel welcome.

Inclusive education, like disability, has become very fluid in the literature, as it takes up different meanings in different contexts. Complex intersections of social class, gender, economic status, religious and cultural beliefs continue to shape it ( see; Kamenopoulou, 2020, Armstrong et al., 2011, Collison et al., 2017, Ainscow et al., 2006). Considering this, scholars working in the global South have called for the deconstruction of disability studies and inclusive education ( e.g. Walton, 2018, Meekosha, 2011, Grech, 2011, 2016, 2015, Kamenopoulou, 2018, Kamenopoulou, 2020, Robinson-Pant, 2020, Phasha et al., 2017). They argue that, for global inclusive education discourse (underpinned by the UNESCO Salamanca Statement of 1994 and UNCRPD 2006) to be meaningful within local understanding and practicalities, research on inclusive education policy must "decolonise" inclusive education, rights and disability, by engaging with neglected voices and perspectives from the global South. The quest to understand these lived realities of SWDs in HE led me to explore the work that

goes into enacting disability inclusion policies in universities in Nigeria. To do this, I have embarked on what I describe later in this thesis as a *decolonial institutional ethnography*, which explicates how the colonial matrix of power of disability inclusion policies, are shaping the everyday life of SWDs in higher education. Institutional Ethnography is a feminist-inspired sociology which strives to ground social science in the actual activities and material conditions of the individual. It is therefore a 'materialist' method of mapping how things are put together and what happens to people as they carry out their daily and nightly activities, within a web of institutional relations.

Through this lens, I argue that the current institutional cultures of universities in Nigeria is ableist and does not pay attention to students' daily needs and challenges. This has, therefore presaged that SWDs will have to do some 'fitting and fixing work' to be able to participate, both in and out of the classroom. To Grech (2012), history is one of the critical instruments creating the ideological–cultural conditions that facilitate and maintain relations of domination in contemporary times. This chimes with Tuhiwai Smith's argument that the notions of past and present, of place and relationship to a space are underpinned by different orientations towards time and different languages for making time and space real. Smith's argument makes a connection between "time and work" and how they became more critical after the arrival of the missionaries and systematic colonisation (Smith, 2013). An important assertion in this thesis is that the constellation of history, texts, linearity of time and built spaces work together to determine who gets what from the university system.

The belief that the historically "feebleminded and handicapped" (Tomlinson, 2017) cannot function in the scheme of the exploitative use of the university, provided the ideological justification for the exclusion of people with disabilities from the thinking and planning of higher education in the colonies.[1] University has a "history of use" (Ahmed, 2019), a history of the people it normally houses and this history could be seen through the "traces" left behind by the people and ideas it was built for. So, trying to participate in this historically busy space means that SWDs must throw in their bodies, emotions and resources to open up a system

[1] For a full critique of the economic rationales in the development of higher education in Nigeria, see Ahmed, A. 1989. The Asquith Tradition, the Ashby Reform, and the Development of Higher Education in Nigeria. *Minerva,* 27**,** 1-20.

that is often closed through the very appearance of being open (Ahmed, 2019). This "everyday resistance" (Scott, 1985) is what I illustrate in this thesis. I do this through investigating access, participation and transformation work against the "anthropoemic strategy of ableism" (Hughes, 2012) whereby SWDs are seen as unfit to be in the university space and are then dismissed or asked to withdraw. It is on this note that I have raised the following research questions (RQ) to guide this study:

RQ1: How are the meanings of inclusion, disability and inclusive education represented in national policy texts and translated into institutional strategies?

RQ2: What are the working relations that go into the enactment of these disability inclusion policies at universities?

RQ3: How are these working relations transforming the institutional cultures of universities in Nigeria?

### 1.2. Why Disability Inclusion, Why Me?

This current research stems from professional (as a special needs teacher ) and personal (as a student) experiences. My first professional encounter with disability inclusion in education occurred in 2012 during my teaching practicum at an integrative secondary school in Ogbomoso. This school employed an integrative design, where hearing-impaired (HI) students shared the same school environment but not the same classrooms as their non-impaired counterparts. Specialist teachers, proficient in sign language, delivered lessons to HI students. The school had distinct "Deaf" and "Normal" blocks, and while we participated in assemblies and school activities together, deaf students formed clusters guided by a sign language interpreter. My role involved teaching basic science to a group of approximately 40 Junior Secondary School students. Occasionally, when the basic science staff for HI students was absent, I had to teach a mixed group of students with and without hearing impairment, aided by a sign language interpreter. I collaborated with trainee teachers from a special college of education in Oyo, who were also sign language interpreters to deliver my classes.

After completing my teacher training programme in 2012, I moved to Lagos to teach for a year to prepare for my transition to university having been awarded a National Certificate in Education (NCE). I was offered a place at a federal university to study Biology Education, through JAMB's direct entry where I started at 200 level (Year 2). However, the introduction of a new tuition fee policy by the university, increasing registration costs by 100%, posed a significant hurdle. Facing the risk of losing my 'hard-earned' admission, I reached out to local politicians who responded, enabling me to cover the tuition fees. It is important to note that similar to the experience of first-generation university goers that Van den Berghe (1973) interviewed in his work, I was also pursuing my university education against my parents' wish who have advised they do not have resources to help me further my education. While I successfully registered for the first year, sustaining myself throughout the course presented additional challenges. Hostel accommodation became a particular concern, and I unexpectedly found lodging in a makeshift hall within the university campus. Living conditions were basic, with mattresses on the floor, and I often spent nights in lecture halls after "night" [2] classes. It is in these circumstances that I had my second, impactful encounter with disability through sharing this space with around 30 other students, including one with visual impaired student named Lekan. Spending time with him turned out to be a revealing encounter with the university's shortcomings in meeting the diverse needs of SWDs.

Lekan's late admission, he told me, was due to the university not wanting to clear him for the Law programme he had been offered, after discovering he is visually impaired. But he fought the institutional discrimination and was reinstated. Despite challenges, Lekan navigated campus life, using adaptive technology to access legal texts and building a support network within the lodge. The university's charity model of disability inclusion placed the onus on students like Lekan to prove their belonging. Reflecting on these experiences, I researched inclusive education policy in Nigeria in 2016, interviewing teachers and delving into the challenges of policy implementation (Akanmu and Isiaka, 2016). While completing my master's programme at the University of Glasgow in 2019, I also analysed international students' experiences within the inclusion and diversity policies of a UK university, to build

[2] This is an informal class session where students use empty lecture halls and rooms for study during the night. It provides an alternative for the absence of a 24hr library on campus.

on my interest on how individuals are represented and constructed within policy texts and institutional strategies.

Thus, this research stems from my interest in addressing the concerns I have carried from my roles as a teacher, community facilitator, and policy researcher. It sets out to contribute to understanding the efforts that every student, akin to myself and Lekan, invest in navigating a system that professes equal access and participation.

### 1.3. Structure of the Thesis

The next chapter unpacks some of the key concepts underpinning this study. I look at the varied ways in which disability has been and is still being defined, and the problem of adopting a 'working' definition. I then critique the lenses or models under which the meanings of disability and inclusive education have been developed. I emphasise that these models – and accompanying studies - developed largely by scholars in the global North, have macadamised the experience of people with disabilities in the Global South (world majority): they have become the universal terms of reference for debates and studies on disability inclusion around the world. I then look at the evolution of Salamanca Policy Framework for Inclusion and how Nigeria and other African countries have implemented or responded to the policy. This chapter also presents a review of institutional cultures in relation to the issues of equity of access and federal character within the Nigerian HE system. I argue that the current design of the university education system, primed on the (re)production of skilled workforce for economic development, has continued to exclude the access and participation of SWDs. While there has been an attempt to make HE available for all ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria through the federal character principles, SWDs have not always been on the equity agenda. I evidence this by reviewing studies on the experience of SWDs in the Nigerian HE.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical and methodological framework for the study. I set up a theoretical dialogue between Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Decolonial Theories (DT), laying a foundation for my exploration of the universalising and organising tendencies of policy texts about everyday actualities. I explain how I have used IE as a method to inquire about a quintain (Stake, 2006) across three cases, and the methods of data generation deployed in the study. I then shift my focus to the "I" in this work, drawing attention to the inadequacy of the

reflexivity tools in IE and explaining how I have reflected on my roles and responsibilities as a sociologist, and the "violence" I carry as I do this work. This chapter concludes by looking at the techniques used in making sense of the data and presenting the findings.

The first research question is partly addressed in chapter 4, by looking at the key macro policy texts informing disability inclusion in Nigeria. I start with the socio-political context in which the first National Policy on Education was developed, by examining how this text and its versions have presented the meanings of disability, disability inclusion and inclusive education. I then look at how these meanings have been interpreted and transplanted into subsequent policy texts such as the National Policy on Special Needs Education and National Policy on Inclusive Education. While pre-empting some of the issues addressed in the rest of the thesis, I provide a brief overview with regards to how these texts occurred in practice, focusing on the path-dependent logics of ideological knowledge of disability inclusion.

Chapter 5 brings the contexts of this study in conversation with texts, by exploring how these macro policy texts have been interpreted and translated into institutional strategies. I use the contextual analysis framework by Ball et al. (2012) to explain how different contexts of implementation such as history, mission statements, leadership and resources, impact on how universities enact policies.

Chapters 6 and 7 address the second research question by considering the work that SWDs do within the contexts of access and participation policies. The question here is how the work that goes into disability inclusion is organised. Chapter 6 shows the journeys of three SWDs. It highlights the "invisible" work they do as they move from their previous educational background to the point where they are considered admitted and begin university, to how they navigate the process of settling into their respective courses. Advancing the understanding of this policy work, I look at students' participation work in chapter 7. This includes what goes on in their hostel accommodation, how they get to campus and to class, and what participation in digital and built spaces means for them. It also involves the assessment cultures, and the work students do within the university's assessment policies. I use the two levels of work, i.e. access and participation, to show that while SWD students have to work hard to thrive in an institutional culture or space not built for people like them, they also work to transform this

space. This then connects the second research question to the third question answered in chapter 8.

Chapter 8 concludes the work analysis by parting with the normative understanding whereby access and participation produce outcomes. I shift my analysis from this linearity to focus on how the ableist culture in the university is being challenged by the transformation work that SWD students do textually, politically and viscerally. I highlight this 'fixing' work by exploring the role of student unionism in transforming how stakeholders in university think and do disability inclusion. I also document my attempt at amplifying this transformation process by employing Alan Touraine's sociological intervention.

For the three core empirical chapters, I have presented some maps to illustrate how the everyday work that SWDs do are organised within the institution. This visualisation of the work process starts from the experience of SWDs and accentuates how their daily/nightly activities connect across the institutional ruling relations. I have been able to graphically map these connections by situating texts, discourses and institutional processes within the everyday experiences of SWDs while keeping the institution in view.

I conclude the thesis in chapter 9 by revisiting the salient themes that are discussed in the previous chapters, and what they mean for the fields of inclusive education, policy sociology, institutional ethnography and the Nigerian Higher Education system. I also look at the limitations of the study and make suggestions for further exploration.

# Chapter 2. Literature Review

## 2.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the concepts underpinning this thesis. It provides an overview of previous research on institutional cultures and disability inclusion policies in Nigerian higher education, as well as around the world. It begins by delving into the "definitions" of disability across different contexts, examining how the dominant perspectives from the global North have influenced the understanding and development of inclusive education as a global discourse. Additionally, this chapter examines the policy of inclusive education, through the lens of coloniality and decolonisation debates in Africa. To illustrate how disability has been marginalised within the identity trio of race, gender and class, the chapter presents studies on diversity, inclusion and institutional cultures. Finally, the chapter concludes with an examination of the experiences of SWDs in Nigerian higher education, highlighting the need for a holistic study of how inclusion policies are being enacted by universities.

## 2.2. Defining An Evolving Concept: Disability and its meanings

It would take a great deal of space to detail the shifts and turns of the meaning of disability, how it has been read, written and received by people with disabilities, and disability as a discourse at government level. In this regard, Titchkosky (2007) argues that disability needs to be written and read differently, beyond the concretisation of the parameters of disability set by institutions and people. With the wide range of definitions that seek to describe or define what disability is and is not, Titchkosky argues that "definition is a form of meaning-making; like any other discourse about disability and therefore has *real consequences* for how disability can be read, written, thought about, and lived" (2007 p.12 emphasis mine). A place to start is the definition proposed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2006, whereby disability is recognised as "an *evolving concept* resulting from the interaction between persons with impairments, attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (UNCRPD, 2006 p. 2, emphasis mine). This definition recognises the fluidity of the meaning of disability and how it is shaped by the relationship between body, performance and

environment. This may explain why the UNCRPD adopts a broad categorisation of persons with disabilities, focusing on the affirmation of all types of disabilities, the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for those with disabilities (Etieyibo, 2020).

The shifts in the field of disability studies have led to a proliferation of terms or labels for people with disabilities, none of which has acquired any sort of hegemony, partly because they are sometimes resisted by different epistemological turns (Lane, 2017). The social dimension of defining disability emerged from the scholarship and activism of disabled people and their organisations in the UK in the 1970s (Finkelstein, 1980, Oliver, 1990). This group sees disability as a product of the politics of disablement (Oliver and Barnes, 2012), caused by a "contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people with physical impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream social activities" (UPIAS 1976, p.15). According to these social modelists, society is the source of physical disability and imposes it on people with impairment. This movement redefined the official meaning of the label "disabled", a term which is now used to indicate how people are disabled by their environment[3].

Another label that has gained currency is the people-first language, which came from the People First self-advocacy movement that began in the United States also in the 1970s (Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council, 2016). This language grew out of the original statement "we are people first" made at the 1974 convention of people with intellectual disabilities who were tired of being called "retarded" (ibid 2016, p.2). This label has also been fiercely criticised by the deaf and blind communities, as they feel that the people first language is an "unholy crusade" which focuses on disability in "an ungainly new way but have done nothing to educate anyone or change anyone's attitudes" (Vaughan, 1997). Their argument is that rather than serving the interests of people with disabilities, people-first language serves the "interest of experts" who have the capacity to name and therefore see blindness or deafness as a "marred identity" (Goffman 1963, as cited in Vaughan, 1997), masked by the

[3] See Oliver and Barnes 2012 for an extended argument on the tyranny of official definitions.

people-first language. In a similar vein to those protesting the labelling and re-labelling of disability, Titchkosky (2007) argues that disability discourse can serve something other than the interests of disabled people because it uses disability as a metaphor to express only that which is unwanted and inept.

Works on the experience of SWDs in Nigeria have followed this global trajectory of naming; studies reviewed in this work disparately use "physically impaired or challenged" (Bamiteko et al., 2017, Ajayi et al., 2020), "students or learners with disabilities" (Ajuwon et al., 2015, Brydges and Mkandawire, 2020, Akanmu and Isiaka, 2016), "persons or people with disabilities" (Etieyibo, 2020, Imam and Abdulraheem-Mustapha, 2016), "students with impairment" (Onuigbo et al., 2020), and "special needs students" (Osokoya and Junaid, 2015). A similar trend is observable in the Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE) and its corollaries: the term "handicapped children" was used in the first edition of the NPE, indexed under the "special education" section of the document.[4]

As Grech noted, there has been little engagement with faiths and beliefs in the conceptualisation of disability in disability studies (Grech, 2015). Similarly, Etieyibo and Omiegbe (2016) argue that the literature on disability in Nigeria says little about the role that religion, culture and beliefs play in the discriminatory practices against persons with disabilities. Abosi and Ozoji (1985) as cited in Etieyibo (2016), point out that beliefs about disability have been attributed to different factors such as witchcraft, sex, gods, the supernatural and charms. In traditional communities in Africa, disability was understood as punishment or a curse, or serving as retribution for the offences of their forefathers (Imafidon, 2018, Etieyibo, 2022). Munyi (2012)'s historical review of perceptions of disability in some African countries reveals that the treatment of people with disabilities could range from pampering to total rejection. As such, reports of people with disabilities being kidnapped and used for sacrifice (Etieyibo, 2016) in Nigeria, even with the spread of Christianity and Islam, have increased due to the belief that persons with disabilities are somehow less than human and can therefore be used for rituals. Etieyibo (2016) noted that this practice is part of rituals in the Traditional African Religions. People with mental illness (particularly women), oculocutaneous albinism and angular kyphosis, are said to have been victims of this cruelty. In communities which embrace

[4] See chapter four for further analysis of the NPE.

the pampering or gentler perception of disability, on the other hand, Ndlovu (2016) notes that persons with disabilities are historically over-protected, patronised and exempted from doing chores.

It is important to understand how communities or groups within the country have conceptualised disability. There is no language equivalent for 'disability' in Igbo (Nwokorie and Devlieger, 2019) or Yoruba (Adegbindin, 2019) languages. This is because, as earlier noted by Ingstad and Whyte (1995, p.7), a person with impairments (*nkwaru*) is either addressed according to the impairment type (e.g. the blind person *'onye ishi'*, the lame disabled *'onye ngworu'*, the mentally disabled '*onye ara'*) or may also be addressed by the generic name of impairment – '*onye nkwaru'* (a 'dented' or 'unwholesome' person). The importance of 'wholeness' in Igbo cosmology means that congenital disability carries a stigma (Nwokorie and Devlieger, 2019); however, while the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria "view an impairment as a 'misfortune', they do not discriminate against disability explicitly. Rather, they place different values on people who have and do not have a disability" (ibid p. 5).

In the Yorùbá cosmology, disabled people are referred to as *Akanda* (specially created person) or *Eni-Oosa* (companions of Orisa-nla). Colloquially, people are addressed after their impairment types, such as *Aaro* (physically impaired), *Afoju* (blind) *Odi* (deaf), *Afin* (albino), *Arara* (dwarf) *Oniwarapa* (someone with epilepsy). In his work, Adegbindin (2019) reports that disability among the Yorùbá, has a mythological origin: it is strictly associated with Òrìṣà-nlá or Ọbàtálá, a Yorùbá deity regarded as the supreme deity of the Yorùbá pantheon. Adegbindin further explains that the Yoruba mythology characterises Orisa-nla as the "sculptor-divinity" "arch-divinity", charged by Olódùmarè, the Supreme Being, with the responsibility of moulding the physical part of man (p.11). As such, Orisa-nla was,

> "creating differing bodily configurations to demonstrate his tolerance of pluralism" and "his interest in individual particularities"; "creating differing bodily configurations that are not meant to hurt individuals, but according to his own fancy", implying Òrìṣà-nlá creates only good bodily configurations. (p. 22).

Adegbindin concludes that "unseeing" mortal individuals need some "form of Platonic reminiscence to appreciate the material creation" of the superior artist (ibid. p. 22). An example of how this is formulated in the Yoruba cosmology can be found in the oral saying :

*"Onígẹ̀gẹ̀ ̀ìsáájú ló ba gẹ̀gẹ̀ ̀jẹ́*
*Bóbá ṣe pé ó fi ń soge ni*
*Gbogbo ayé ìbá mọ̀ ́pé gẹ̀gẹ̀ ̀kì í ṣàrùn.*
*It is the first bearer of goiter that disparaged it*
*If he had flaunted it proudly*
*The whole world would have known that goiter is not a disease"*
Adegbindin (2019, p. 22).

These words certainly support Grech's argument that the reading of religion and faith into the meanings of disability in these communities must not be ignored, as they tend to underpin and shape the critical narratives of people, their social and embodied reality (Grech, 2012). Grech further argues that beliefs can also become a critical source of resilience and resistance (even psychological) for disabled people and their families or may compensate for the paucity of other resources such as medical support (to which the poor, particularly in the majority world often have scarce access) (Ibid, p. 65). Similarly, Etieyibo and Omiegbe (2016) discuss how belief and faith can impact the attitudes and behaviours of others (e.g. families and community members). From this perspective, disability, just like poverty, is seen as an individual problem or/and as the will of God. To Grech, this conception is not a historical accident but is an extension of the "Christianising mission in colonial times, a compliance bought and sold cheaply as the way to the coloniser's heaven, on the coloniser's terms and conditions; the coloniser became God: unchallenged and omnipotent" (Grech, 2012, p. 65).

These attempts to define disability also pose challenges when it comes to "measuring" disability for policy programmes or institutional support, as the categories of impairment are often used to exclude or contain the experience of people with disabilities. Swartz (2014)in South Africa, Deveau (2016) in Canada and Gabel and Miskovic (2014) in the US, have shown that while self-identification questionnaires often reinforce the medicalised way of knowing disability, they are sometimes exclusionary and useless in determining who is disabled or not. They argue that these instruments, usually drawn from high-order instruments like the International Classification of Functioning or Chicago Disability Index, lack context-specific disability needs and ignore the fluidity of the meaning of disability. In this thesis, I have

interchangeably used the label "students with disabilities" or "disabled students" because I would argue that despite aforementioned criticisms, people-first language means that SWDs can be seen as people before their impairment; moreover, it recognises the diversity in disability experience. I use "disabled" alongside the notion that the "practice" of higher education provision in Nigeria is "disabling". Practice is used in accordance with Bourdieu's notion of practice being the combined effect of habitus, capital and field(Bourdieu, 1984).

It is also important to note that the discourse of equity and justice in higher education has seen the "othering" of disability. The current insertion of disability in the diversity debate stems from the philosophical argument that disability should be understood in the same manner as other markers of difference like gender, race and class, are construed(Duma, 2019, Oliver, 2009). However, as Titchkosky (2007) argues, adding disability to these oft-cited categories will not alone address the real consequences of impairment: there is a need to see how it intersects with other forms of discriminations. Indeed, this premise that has been well explored by critical disability studies scholars (see for example Shuttleworth, 2007, Goodley, 2013, Hutcheon and Lashewicz, 2020). Grech similarly asserts that disability's interpretation is subject to change, being influenced by varying contexts and circumstances that are in a constant state of flux (Grech, 2012). As a result, disability defies encapsulation across cultures and cannot be comprehensively understood through a singular model, whether social, medical, or any other universalising discourse.

### 2.3. On the 'Northernness' of Disability Models

Since the 1970s, disability research in the global North has witnessed significant growth among both disabled activists and academics. There are at least six notable models (moral, medical, minority, social, relational, and cultural or critical disability models) in the disability studies literature, broaching a sense of progressiveness or what Adegbindin (2018) called a "prodigious achievement" (p. 12) within the thinking of issues around disability in the global North. This thesis discusses only three of these models by virtue of their enduring currency in the policy and practice of disability inclusion around the world. First is the medical model, which focuses on the sociology of an individual's chronic illness and their physical or mental deficits, underpinned by the biological determinism of ableness (Thomas, 2012, Thomas, 2007,

Thomas, 1999). Reddy (2011) argues that the medical paradigm has objectified and classified individuals as healthy or sick, sane or mad, and established a hierarchical standard for treating abnormal and inferior bodies. This implies that only scientific medical concepts can guide our comprehension of the differences that exist between people who are considered "normal" and those who pose social problems.

This simplistic understanding has been subjected to much critique. Adegbindin (2018), like other critics of the medical model, recognised that its dominance was due to advancements in medical knowledge, the professionalisation of medicine, and a social arrangement that allowed medical professionals to pathologise and psychologise the society. Granted by the objectification of the 'body', the medical professionals "diagnosed differences as deficiencies and defective bodies and minds as 'dangerous' and 'threatening' to the rest of society" (Barnes and Mercer 2003, p. 32). However, individuals with disabilities, inspired by the activism of various minority groups in the 1960s and 1970s, expressed their dissatisfaction with the discriminatory social practices they experienced due to the medical profession's overwhelming influence on their lives (Vehmas 2008, p. 21). The current trend is to regard disability as a social construct, a social arrangement, or "the product of specific social and economic structures" (Terzi 2004, p. 141).

An approach to disabilities emerged from this critique of the medical model, labelled as the 'strong' British social model (Shakespeare, 2006) and represented by the works of UK academics like Michael Oliver (2009, 1990), Colin Barnes (2012, 2010), Vic Finkelstein (2001, Finkelstein, 2007) and Carol Thomas (2012, 2007, 1999). Terzi (2004) explains that the social model aims to address issues of marginalisation, oppression, and discrimination by identifying and removing disabling barriers produced by hegemonic social and cultural institutions. According to Oliver and Barnes (2012), this movement has led to the reconstruction of the term "disabled" in the UK, against what they call "the official definitions" (p. 20). Publications from the meeting of the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) opened up new lines of thinking, and of doing disability research and policymaking (Oliver and Barnes, 2012). Rather than focusing on the 'individual', these social model researchers turn their attention to exposing broader social and cultural barriers, as well as discriminations embedded in 'society.' Thus, it is the 'society' that is disabling and not the impairment in the

body of an individual; from this perspective, impairment is distinct from disability. Oliver (2009) argues that the separation of impairment and disability is a practical approach to identifying and addressing issues that can be resolved through collective action, as opposed to the medical or professional treatment of individuals. This premise has been critiqued for failing to provide an alternative arrangement or solution to the problems that it identifies (Watson and Vehmas, 2020). The social model is also criticised for often neglecting issues of medical intervention, the psycho-emotional consequences of disablement and the cultural locations of disability (Shakespeare, 2013, Shakespeare, 2006, Mitchell and Snyder, 2003).

In the contexts of extreme poverty, where livelihoods (and, in fact, most activities) depend on physical strength, and where health care is frequently absent or, at best, fragmented (Grech, 2015), the body as a repository of the personal, the social and of pain, becomes harder to ignore. Similar to what Marks (1999, p.129) refers to as "the intentional experiencing body," Titchkosky (2007) also notes that "embodiment" encompasses the diverse ways in which we (self and other) establish relationships with our bodies. In short, regardless of how it is defined, narrated, or experienced, disability provides an opportunity to critically examine the dominant cultural practices that help us maintain our physical and mental well-being (Titchkosky, 2007 p.13).

Poststructuralist/postmodernist scholars in disability studies (see for example, Goodley (2013), Meekosha (2011), Shuttleworth (2007), and Mitchell and Snyder (2003)) rejected the Marxist orientation of the social modelists. Instead, they turned to a model they described as 'critical or cultural disability studies' (CDS). Dominated by North American scholars, these perspectives stress the role of culture, knowledge and sexuality in disablism, troubling the dominant ways of knowing disability with other categories of existence, by resisting operational binaries such as disabled/non-disabled, normal/abnormal. Scholars alike critiqued them for failing to decentre the white/male/economically privileged/disabled subject at the centre of the theoretical coevality of disability studies in the North (Shuttleworth, 2007). In response, CDS has drawn on other discourses, including queer theory (Kafer, 2013, McRuer, 2006), critical race theory and decolonial (Meekosha, 2011, Grech, 2015), and feminist theory (Kafer, 2013, Garland-Thomson, 2005). Together with the Marxist/materialist and cultural theorist perspectives, other methods used in disability studies include those drawing on

phenomenology (Goodley et al., 2012, Paterson and Hughes, 1999), critical realism (Watson and Vehmas, 2020) and other variants of feminist theoretical perspectives (Thomas, 2007). What all these perspectives share is the absence of accounts of what disabilities mean to people of the 'majority' South (Grech, 2012).

Following other scholars on decolonising disability studies e.g (Meekosha 2011, Grech, 2015), I would argue that the thinking and doing of disability has been hegemonically 'Northern', as studies in the North underpinned by these models have informed legislative policies and international charters on disability. These include the World Health Organisation's definition of disablement, the CRPD and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health(WHO, 2011). This has perhaps enabled the introduction to the Routledge Handbook for Disability Studies (Watson and Vehmas, 2020) to proudly state that:

> "The social model informed policy development in the European Union, the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Trade Organisation, and the World Bank. While it might not have completely changed the practice, the social model had significantly altered the discourse that surrounds disability, nationally, internationally and multinationally, at the highest level" (Watson and Vehmas, 2020 p.3).

From a postcolonial stance, scholars have critiqued these policy documents for perpetuating 'minority' views of the disability experience emanating from Europe and America as universal and global( see; Mitchell and Snyder, 2003, Rizvi and Lingard, 2006, Barker and Murray, 2010, Grech, 2016). As Grech (2015) and Meekosha (2011) point out, the dominance of the North in writing about disability has resulted in the marginalisation and appropriation of abject experiences of disabilities in the global South as 80% of the population with disabilities globally is in the low and middle-income countries of the global South. Meekosha further contends that this hegemony is constitutive of an intellectual crisis for disability studies in the periphery. Failing to address the 'geopolitics' of disability studies, further disables the already disabled inhabitants of the global South (Meekosha, 2011).

Indeed, one could argue that the history of the global South, particularly countries in Africa, has been a history of disablement from the Middle Passage's horrors to colonialism and (neo)coloniality. Edward Said's work explains why it is important to pay critical attention to the particularities of people experiencing disability in postcolonial societies, and why disability

studies from the south have been struggling for visibility in the shadow of the western models. As Said (2011) noted in *the Shadow of the West*, the "act of representing (thus reducing) others involves violence of some sort to the subject of representation" (p. 59). It follows that the minority worldview of disability studies in the North neglects the postcolonial 'locations' of disability(Barker and Murray, 2010). According to Grech (2015), many disability theorists view the majority world as a mere subject of analysis, examining it from the comfortable distance of their Western offices. This approach oversimplifies and homogenises the world, allowing Western perspectives to dominate, and ignoring any non-conforming elements. The next section on inclusive education unpacks the neo-colonial implications of this hegemony.

### 2.4. Inclusive Education and the Salamanca Statement

Inclusive Education (IEd) is an approach that seeks to establish a fair education system that eliminates the exclusion of students with special needs from school communities, thereby promoting equal opportunities for access, participation and achievement of all categories of learners. The origin of IEd has been traced to the activism of some parents in Northern countries between the 1960s and 1970s, dissatisfied with the way their children with impairment were segregated from mainstream schooling (Dyson and Forlin,1999, as cited in Walton, 2018). Through a number of policy mandates, Canada was the first country to use the term 'Inclusive Education', before it was later adopted by other countries of the global North (Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht, 2018, Walton, 2018). In the quest to further the goal of Education for All, by considering a fundamental policy shift to promote the approach to IEd, about 300 delegates of 92 governments and 25 organisations attended the UNESCO's conference held in Salamanca, Spain, from 7 to 10 June 1994. This conference was set up to endorse the Salamanca Statement on framework of actions detailing the modus of operandi of the IEd policy for nations and regions (UNESCO,1994).

The concept of inclusive education is highly debated, as there are questions about whether it should be limited to children with special educational needs or disabilities, or if it should be seen as a reform that responds to all students who are susceptible to marginalisation, based on any form of identity (UNESCO, 2009). The UNESCO's Salamanca Statement of 1994 brought IEd to policy limelight by stating that children with special educational needs should be given

access to mainstream schools by accommodating them within a child-centred pedagogy that can cater for their needs (UNESCO, 1994). The guiding principle stipulated in this framework is that schools should admit all children, irrespective of their physiological, psychological, emotional, linguistic, social and other characteristics.

As with disability discourses, IEd emerged out of the well-developed special education systems in many countries of the global North, before being pushed as a global remedy for educational exclusion. After the publication of the Salamanca Statement, countries, especially in the global South, started to adopt IEd (Kozleski, Artiles, and Waitoller, 2011) as a systemic pathway to achieving the Education for All agenda. Nevertheless, given the legacies of colonialism that characterise educational exclusion in developing countries (Phasha et al., 2017), and the rapid waves of globalisation (Dei, 2016), many of these countries are struggling to implement IEd.

The challenge for inclusion enthusiasts like myself and other scholars who periodically review the Salamanca Statement (Ainscow et al., 2019, Kiuppis and Hausstätter, 2015), is to understand how inclusion is conceptualised and operationalised as a systemic reform issue, and its implications for whole school development. Ainscow et al. (2006) differentiate between "narrow" and "broad" definitions of inclusion. The former focuses on promoting the inclusion of certain groups of students, mainly those with special needs, in "mainstream" or "regular" education systems. In contrast, the latter does not target specific groups of students, but rather, diversity and how schools respond to the diversity of all students, including class, race, gender, disability, disadvantaged, minority groups, indeed, every member of the school community. This shift from IEd as a response to individual "support needs" to one that demands responsiveness to diversity in all forms, is critical in addressing educational exclusion as the primary form of social exclusion in Africa. This broader perspective entails restructuring the culture, policy, and practices in schools, with a focus on the participation and learning of all kinds of students who may face exclusionary pressures, including those with special educational needs.

In taking stock of the meanings of inclusive education, 20 years after Salamanca, Kiuppis and Hausstätter (2015) note that, although the new thinking associated with inclusive education has been interpreted in different ways, IEd is generally considered a non-categorical, all-embracing approach characterised by ensuring a basic minimum standard or education for all.

With the fusion of the "inclusive education" agenda with the "education for all" agenda, these authors argue that there is a need to think of appropriate ways for education to consider the universalistic character of the notion of inclusion while at the same time taking into account the particular situations of people with disabilities whose experiences inspired the Salamanca Statement. The worry that necessary attention on persons with disabilities might disappear when they are not a particular focus, led UNESCO to establish a number of Flagships focusing on the specific EFA-related issues, including education for people with disabilities (Kiuppis, 2014).

### 2.4.1. Implementing the Salamanca Statement in the global South

Inclusion or IEd as implemented currently, has been described as a 'paired' philosophy and pedagogy, meant to educate special needs students along with their peers (Ajuwon, 2008). Scholars from different contexts (see Walton (2018) and Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht (2018) in South Africa ; and Kamenopoulou (2020) in Colombia) have argued that IEd has enjoyed unprecedented development in many countries of the global North. This has been possible due to well-established special education systems and environments where the population of out-of-school children is low, and quality basic education is widely available. IEd in these countries has been further supported by instrumental resources, legislative frameworks, skilled teachers and therapists, and parent support (Walton, 2018). In this regard, a link can be seen between the growth of IEd in global North and the expansion of academic research in the field, which has helped to illuminate its adoption and implementation. For instance, the editorial board members of the International Journal of Inclusive Education who review and edit articles for publication is dominated by scholars in countries of the global North. In reviewing the progress of inclusive education in Africa, 25 years after Salamanca, Pather (2019) also noted that countries in Africa in particular are struggling to implement IEd:

> "Ideas and theories of special and Inclusive Education were born and developed in the West and so the globalisation of special and Inclusive Education is dependent on a transfer of knowledge from North to South or West to East. Multilateral and bilateral development agendas are inevitably driven by a reliance on western ideals in the belief that the 'west knows best' (p.4)

What this means is that while Salamanca has enabled a move away from separate specialised education for children with disabilities, to more 'inclusive' schooling, in practice, inclusive education appears to be conflated with integration. Both the disparate conceptions and implementations of IEd across countries has been attributed to "different historical, cultural and socio-economic realities which give rise to different contextual constraints and possibilities" (Pathers, 2019 p.784). Similarly, Ajuwon (2008) maintains that policies and participation frameworks for implementing IEd in developing countries are greatly influenced by extrinsic rather than intrinsic circumstances. This is akin to what Ball (2017 p. 47) has called "policy epidemics", driven by a process of global convergence, through technologies of good practice.

In an exploration of educational inclusion and exclusion in India and South Africa, Sayed et al. (2007) note that in order to evolve an inclusive education system, the starting point is to "address the nature, form and content of the policies designed to overcome exclusion" (p. x). This phenomenon of educational exclusion was later described by Walton (2017), as a 'wicked problem', posing a complex, dynamic, multi-faceted and intractable challenge to the realisation of an inclusive and socially just education system:

> "Wicked problems have no definitive formulations; they are unique; they can always be considered as symptoms of other problems; solutions to them cannot be true or false, but good or bad; and there is no test of a solution to them, with each attempt at a solution counting significantly. Thinking about solutions is inextricably bound up with thinking about problems…" (Walton, 2017 p. 89).

While inclusive education has been presented as a policy recipe to address exclusion in Africa, the development of IEd across the globe and specifically in Africa in this review, has informed what an uncritical adoption of the policy could mean for countries in the global South. This review lends credence to why IEd has been critiqued from a number of perspectives: IEd has no substantial theoretical grounding (Armstrong et al., 2011); it is a neo-colonial project and expensive (Walton, 2018; Phasha et al., 2017; Kamenopoulou, 2020; and Pather, 2019); and it eliminates the specialist support deserved by children with special needs (Grech, 2015 ) based on the medical to social model transition. The next section looks at the neo-colonial critique in more detail.

### 2.4.2. Inclusive Education as a "neo-colonial" Project

In the context of the neo-liberal agenda, Africa's education is characterised as facing great challenges, and in need of creative imagination in order to revise effective schooling and education for young learners (Dei, 2016, Mundy, 2008). Similar to Brock-Utne's (2002) poignant question of *whose education for all?,* there has been debate about need to deconstruct the universality within the right-based discourse for inclusive education (Tikly, 2019, Phasha et al., 2017, Singal, 2019). Scholars contend that any discussion about rights must first acknowledge that they are a western invention (Grech, 2011) and are safeguarded by the UN through non-governmental organisations funded by countries in global North (Connell, 2011). Similarly, Meekosha (2011) argues that within rights discourse, the notion of universalism implies an expectation for developing nations to progress toward Western standards of human rights, including the acknowledgment of individual rights, reflecting a colonial and imperialistic standpoint. This perspective may elucidate the considerable challenge in achieving the "transnationalisation of rights" (Kamenopoulou, 2018). Researchers working on disability rights in different contexts such as Miles (1996) in Southern Africa, Singal (2006) in India and Meekosha and Soldatic (2011) in Australia noted that the view of human rights as "universal" often runs this risk of being utopian, due to their inattention to local contexts, political economies and cultures that can therefore render them contextually insignificant.

Situating IEd within the decolonial debate, Walton (2018) highlights how IEd has assumed the three prisms of coloniality that decoloniality seeks to address: the coloniality of knowledge, power and being. From this perspective, IEd has been critiqued as a form of coloniality of knowledge, taken up as a policy prescription to address educational exclusion in Africa. For instance, the "Teacher Education Resource Pack" developed on the eve of Salamanca, drew exclusively on the input of IEd scholars from the North (Saleh, 2014). Similarly, texts on whole-school approaches to IEd such as the "Index for Inclusion" (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) have been developed from studies on IEd in the Global North. IEd as a coloniality of power is attributed to the failure of the policy in some African countries, given the serious financial implications of IEd policies (Walton, 2018). As countries in the global South are battling with poverty and instabilities rooted in the legacies of colonialism and western-coordinated civil wars, Rodda and Eleweke (2002) reported severe inadequacies of learning materials and facilities for inclusive schooling, inadequate funding, lack of well-trained teachers and allied

professionals and lack of supporting legislative framework as corroborated by UNESCO's (2020) Inclusion report. While further study is needed on how IEd is being financed globally, the argument made here is that IEd is expensive and unaffordable for countries of the global South. This is contrary to the foremost declarations made by UNESCO in the 1994 Salamanca statement that IEd will ensure "…the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994, p. ix).[5]

Lastly, the position of IEd as a form of coloniality of being, is how inclusive education has been framed in decolonial debates. Maldonado-Torres (2007) noted that coloniality of being is "coextensive with the production of the colour-line in its different expressions and dimensions of dehumanised subjects" (ibid p. 257). As Allan (2007) also argues, certain identities, languages, literacies, and cultural beliefs within school communities continue to be marginalized and unwelcome in formal education systems that are still deeply influenced by colonial/racial. legacies. Similarly, Slee (2011)observes that while students may be "included" in these systems, their presence is often tolerated rather than embraced, leading to uncertain outcomes. In essence, the principles of IEd have been criticised for primarily emphasising access to existing schooling structures without considering the systemic inequalities and exclusionary forces that underpin educational systems.

### 2.4.3. Decolonising Inclusive Education

As calls for the decolonisation of school systems continue to gain traction, Phasha et al. (2017) posit that African education must grapple with the question of how much of IEd focus on teaching learners and educators about indigeneity, decolonisation and resistance. If we are serious about the need for an Afrocentric IEd, these authors argue, there is a need to engage in asking critical questions and reframing our pedagogies. However, as Tuck and Yang (2012) have argued, "decolonisation" should not be simply a metaphor, grafted onto other issues that need to be addressed in the society: "when metaphor invades decolonisation, it kills the very possibility of decolonisation; it recentres whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future" (ibid, p.3). However, the distinctions they make between colonialism (external and internal) and settler colonialism, where land is the most

[5] UNESCO's 2020 Inclusion report later suggest that students with disabilities cost about 2 to 2.5 times more to educate than other students, and information on how countries finance inclusive education remain patchy.

contentious commodity, portends the plurality and diverse ways people have experienced colonialism since 1492 when colonial imaginaries went global.

Through a decolonial lens, Phasha et al. (2017), Dei (2016) and Walton (2018) propose an Afrocentric IEd rooted in African values, knowledge and beliefs. Even though, positing a single African worldview is not possible given the plurality and diversity of African cultures but there are points of convergence that suggest shared commonalities. For example, the philosophy of *Ubuntu* (mostly in southern African) is usually illustrated by the phrase '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu'*, which means 'a human being is a human being because of other human beings'. Similarly, in Tanzania, *Ujamaa ('*familyhood') hinges on the ideals of equality, freedom and unity(Ibhawoh and Dibua, 2003, Nyerere, 1962). In the Igbo language of West Africa, *Umunna bu ike* means 'brotherhood is power' (Okoro, 2010) while Yoruba celebrates *Ọmọlúàbí* , an individual endowed with Iwa (character) who is guided by the pursuit of the highest good(Akanbi and Jekayinfa, 2016, Oyinloye, 2021). The inference here is that there are some African philosophies which resonate with the concept of IEd that can further harness equity and fairness potentials. But these concepts in themselves cannot achieve inclusion not only that there is a dearth of empirical studies, bar Ubuntu, on what they mean for and in modern/capitalist societies, their conceptualisation of personhood could also be exclusionary (Imafidon, 2021).

In terms of disability inclusion, Mutanga (2023)argues that applying the Ubuntu philosophy can foster a culture of respect and understanding that values diversity and advances disability inclusion. Furthermore, integrating Ubuntu principles into research, policies and practices, can create more equitable and just societies for all individuals, including those with disabilities. Mbazzi (2023) explains that while Ubuntu is seen as a unifying philosophy of how to behave towards and relate with others, each language within the Bantu family has its own specific version and meaning of the Ubuntu. In this regard, Mbazzi reports on a peer-to-peer support disability inclusion intervention, based on the philosophy of *Obuntu Bulamu* and co-created by a team of children, parents, teachers, disability rehabilitation workers, and academics in Uganda. He concludes that while the project signals the possibilities of translating the Ubuntu philosophy into implementing disability inclusion programmes and interventions, it also had to navigate what he describes as the "imposed frameworks and indicators from the Global North" (Mbazzi, 2023 p.2).

In another study looking at the possibility of Ubuntu as a transformation tool for African HE, Shanyanana and Waghed (2016b) argue that the current conception of Ubuntu as inclusion has not enabled the equalisation of voices. While conceptually, Ubuntu acknowledges distributed and received equality, it must also, through the HE system, nurture in all people "some sense of assertiveness, which may enable them to engage in debates and offer their reasons with confidence." These arguments illustrate that 'doing' decolonisation through reforms, or reforming the school system based on these philosophies, remains a socio-political landmine.

### 2.5. On Institutional Cultures

Disability is not the only phenomenon that has received a cultural incision: the culture/s of higher education institutions have also been under scrutiny for the past decades, with scholars looking at universities and colleges as organisations. This shift has been driven by the proliferation of different types of academic settings, the changing demography of students and staff (Gumport, 2007), the imposition of new managerial regimes (Griffith and Smith, 2014) granted by neoliberalism's war on of HE(Giroux, 2017). In this context, the idea of culture has been invoked as a placeholder for shared norms and understandings that constitute institutional ways of life. Sociological interest in HE culture began with a focus on medical students (Becker et al. 1961), laying the foundation for exploring different groups of undergraduate students as sub-cultures (Clark and Trow, 1966), and faculty socialisation and academic work(Tierney and Rhoads, 1993). Some HE researchers in the 1970s followed this trend, linking institutional culture with organisational change and how different cultures and governance styles shaped institutional functions and performance (Bergquist, 1992, Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, Tierney, 1991).

The definition of institutional culture has been contested among HE scholars, along with the dynamic nature of what culture means, what it does, and how organisations construct it. With these nuances in mind, in line with Kezar and Eckel (2002), culture is seen in this study as a fundamental metaphor, emerging as a composite of many different levels — the enterprise, the institution, the subgroup (faculty, administrators, students) and the individual. As a result, this study explores culture at the institutional or organisational level rather than the disciplinary or

academic level. Bergquist's institutional archetypes of culture and Tierney's unique institutional culture frameworks became useful in understanding the components of institutional culture in the literature. Bergquist (1992) focuses on four archetypes by which institutions might be categorised: collegial, managerial, developmental and negotiating cultures. To explore how culture affects change processes within unique institutions, Tierney (1988, 1991, 1993, 2006) has proposed six components: mission, environment, socialisation, strategy, information and leadership. Tierney's framework posits that while an understanding of organisational culture will not solve all institutional dilemmas and challenges, it can lead to understanding the steps required to cultural transformation and change (Kezar and Eckel, 2002). It is also predicated on components being neither static nor mutually exclusive but rather, inextricably linked, operating as a web within an institution (Tierney, 1988, Tierney, 1991). This framework has been used to answers questions about how institutional change might engender equity (Matsau, 2013, Kezar and Eckel, 2002). It is this framework that underpins the review of studies on African university cultures and their responses to equity issues presented in the next section.

### 2.5.1. The Coming of Age of Nigerian Universities and question of National Cohesion

The evolution of contemporary African higher education has colonial and neo-colonial origins and contexts. It is therefore important to situate African university culture within the mutually reinforcing continued cultural imperialism processes exercised by former colonial powers and their international organisations' proxies (Assie-Lumumba, 2006). Over two decades earlier, Mazrui (1992) maintained that a new international cultural order that characterises African universities as culturally dependent on the former colonial powers, was imminent. Mazrui observed that higher education, more specifically, universities in Africa, constitutes a cultural transfer channel and as such, that its renaissance must be addressed through domestication, diversification, and counter-penetration of knowledge production and dissemination (Mazrui, 1992). While universities are being considered as separate from the state, in Nigeria and elsewhere, the level of integration between the two is so significant that they are almost inseparable, as they have often been established and continue to be supported, by the state (Livsey, 2017). As with other Nigerian institutions created during the decolonisation process -

such as state-run businesses and legislative bodies - universities were key sites for the negotiation of decolonisation: "universities were places where people lived, sites of everyday life, and arenas in which the cultural and quotidian dimensions of decolonisation were made manifest" (ibid, p.13). Including university lecturers and students, Africanisation created a new elite of Nigerians who held senior posts in state and semi-state organisations that were seen as placeholders for the British. As Mbembe (2016) writes, Frantz Fanon ─ a critical voice during the anti-colonial liberation struggle ─ "was extremely critical of the project of 'Africanisation' because he did not believe that nation-building could be achieved by those he called the national middle class or the national bourgeoisie" (p.33). This transposition of elitism and the importance invested in the inherited "British standard", outlasted the political transfer of power, as Livsey describes:

> "At University College Ibadan, students were often considered suspiciously Anglophile, and the university's buildings have been viewed with misgiving as embodying British norms that were left implanted in African soil even after the colonisers departed. The foundation of new institutions and the emergence of new cultures of everyday life during decolonisation involved a political economy of 'standards' that were often presented as universal but which were informed by distinctively British and imperial frames for development" (Livsey 2017, p.14.)

Van den Berghe (1973) had earlier noted that Nigeria's foremost university (University of Ibadan) was only Nigerian by geographical location and by the composition of its students: in every other respect, it was British. The composition of the student population was also elitist and unequal, as most Ibadan students were from southern Nigeria, and they were Christian and male. Despite the overwhelming demand for university education then, only a small fraction of Nigerian students from the western educated South were selected for enrolment at Ibadan. This is not too far from the current Nigerian HE system, where approximately 2 million students are enrolled in higher education, and the 2006 census puts the population of Nigerians between 15-24 years old at 28.3 million (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). The dominance of southern Nigerian students at the University of Ibadan at the time has been attributed to the fact that the region had a long-standing history of interactions with "western" education, resulting in the establishment of numerous elite secondary schools that were either government-run or mission-based (Livsey, 2017). Tony Marinho interviewed by Livsey joined the University in 1968, recalled that "most people getting into UI had the diction", something he associated with "the English school background" (cited in Livsey, 2027, p. 92). This

dominance also meant that most students were Christian, around 90 percent, compared with the 35 percent of Nigerian Christians overall (Van den Berghe, 1973): women and students from the predominantly Muslim north were therefore minorities at the University College Ibadan at that time.

In the post-independence constitutional negotiations (1963-1999), this underrepresentation of women and students from "disadvantaged communities" fuelled debates regarding federalism and the quota system. Osaghae (1988) noted that federal character principle was a formalisation process that enshrined a quota system for nation building to increase the representation of Nigerians from the north in the upper echelons of Nigeria's public services, military and educational institutions (Osaghae, 1988). As an important instrument of national cohesion, the federal character principle was meant to relate the structural integration of the federation to the forces of national loyalty, by balancing statist and non- statist units in the composition of the government and its agencies. It became a constitutional matter in the Constitution Drafting Committee and the Constituent Assembly, the bodies that produced the 1979 Constitution, finally finding its way into the constitution as a directive principle of state policy (Ibid, p.5).

Given the significant heterogeneity in terms of language and ethnic groups at state and local government levels, it was also imperative to extend the implementation of the federal character principle to these levels. Section 14(4) of the 1979 constitution accordingly provided that:

> "The Composition of the Government of a state, local government council, or any of the agencies of such government or council, and the conduct of the affairs of the government or council or such agencies shall be carried out in such manner as to recognise the diversity of the people within its area of authority and the need to a sense of belonging and loyalty among all the peoples of the federation." (cited in Osaghae, 1988, p.6)

The federal character principle, then, is designed to be applicable in the federal government as well as in state and local governments. Osaghae contends that there had been considerable public resistance to the notion of federal character on the basis that it sacrifices merit

(qualification) for quota consideration; on the other hand, those who stand to benefit from the quotas have defended the principle equally vehemently. Conceptually, Osaghae argues that federal character in its formulation is flawed and cannot be a suitable model for what he called "consociational accommodation" (ibid, p.7). This sentiment was later echoed by Majekodunmi (2013) when he observed that the principle of federal character tends to differentiate rather than integrate, because the design of the principle is fundamentally flawed. The federal character, as defined and pursued by both the 1979 and 1999 constitutions, "cannot integrate the people because it was an ideology of the minority ruling class aimed at protecting their interests" (p.77). However, before the federal character became a contentious issue within Nigeria's socio-political ethnoscape, the unwitting regionalisation or ethnicisation of HE development opened up the debate around equity and control among the three regions (north, west and east) of the country. To then achieve the federal government's mandate of making all Nigerian universities to have a 'national outlook', universities were then asked to bear the albatross of implementing the federal character principle through the quota system of admission and employment.

Moving on to the question of HE access more broadly, Connell (2019) highlights the weakness of many discussions about equality of access in that they "treat universities and schools as passive: places where pre-existing cultural differences, or family wealth, or class power, become manifest but it is vital to recognise that universities themselves are highly active in *making* inequalities" (Connell 2019, p.104, emphasis in the original). This complicity of the university in the making and reproduction of inequalities is perpetuated primarily through the curriculum, where different kinds of students get different kinds of knowledge (Apple, 2004). What this implies is that universities are reproductive and classificatory machines who, certainly in Nigeria, took inspiration from the start of the colonial expansion. Given their close ties to the colonising power it is perhaps not surprising that they excluded local knowledge formations in favour of the text-based curriculum from the metropole (Connel 2019, Van den Berghe 1973).

This section has attempted to provide an overview of the unequal and colonial foundations of the Nigerian HE system. While equity issues such as ethnicity, religion, gender and regions have received sociological and historical attentions, most work on institutional cultures of

Nigerian universities and their composition (e.g. Van den Berghe, 1973, Livsey, 2017) have failed to address the question of disability as an important "character" that universities need to address. Furthermore, while there has been an increase in research that focuses on diversity in higher education in Africa (Matsau, 2013, Ohajunwa et al., 2015, Becker, 2017, Luvalo, 2019, Chiwandire and Vincent, 2017, Lebeau and Oanda, 2020), there has been limited exploration into disability beyond baseline accessibility (Soje and Eleweke, 2017). This is problematic, as numbers of SWDs are increasing and becoming more diverse. Harwood et al. (2016) observed in their study that students who are traditionally underprivileged usually have precarious relationship with the university and they are often plurally disadvantaged. The plurality and irreducibility of their disadvantage impact not only on the materialities of their daily lives, but also shapes how they conceive of and imagine educational futures (p. 90). This highlights the need for research that addresses disability experiences beyond legal compliance and service provision (Shallish, 2017).

### 2.5.2. Diversity, Disability, Culture and Identity

Scholars have questioned why disability is missing from the discourse of diversity with its implicit referral to race, gender and class. Titchkosky (2007) argues that adding disability to this oft-cited trio will not necessarily translate to genuine opportunities for people with disabilities. However, asking the question can contribute to our understanding of persistent and structural exclusion faced by people with disabilities.

Ahmed (2012), whose work centres around racialised and gendered experiences of university life, argues that the rise in the use of "diversity" has led to the disappearance of other (perhaps more critical) terms, including "equality," "equal opportunities" and "social justice". This has led to what Ahmed calls "non-performativity of diversity" – when naming something does not achieve the intended outcome (Ahmed, 2019). Riddel and Watson (2003), who focus on the 'culture turn' in disability studies and the writing of culture and identity "into" disability, observe that "identity politics have become increasingly important in the liberation struggles of oppressed groups, individualism which underpins post-structuralist and post-modernist thinking may have negative implications for the construction of a shared political vision" (p.10). They submit that making significant headway may be difficult if people with disabilities

cannot come to a consensus on what being disabled entails and what aims a political movement should strive for.

Within the cultural realm, difficulties have ensued in developing a shared disability culture or solidarity. This lack of understanding of persons with disabilities as having social group status, argues Shallish (2017), is a contributing factor to the persistent and structural exclusion of disability within diversity efforts in HE. Shallish further notes that "the perpetuation of disability as an individualised, medical condition maintains its devaluation within diversity efforts" and has led many studies looking at disability in HE to focus solely on juridical and service provision perspectives (Shallish, 2017, p.20). She concludes that there must be point of convergence between disability and other oppressions, and students' needs must be considered through their intersectional identities of race, class or gender.

The importance of intersectional identities is highlighted by Dei (2016) in the context of decolonising the university and reframing the school curriculum and pedagogy. They argue that this involves casting a critical gaze on the structures and processes of educational delivery, through considering the identities that learners bring to the classroom, including race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, class, religion, language and dis (ability). In this regard, I would argue that an understanding of the relationship between school culture and the development of more inclusive policies, practices and pedagogy, must begin with thinking of 'equity' as radically different from 'equality'. According to Black-Hawkins (2002), an inclusive framework for participation must consider: cultural boundaries of time and space; the relationship between cultures and the lives of individuals; the potency of identity and belonging; the role of language and ideology; the uses and misuses of power and control; understandings of 'normal' and 'other' behaviours; and the prevalence of emotions in the daily life of a school.

### 2.5.3. Epistemic Decolonisation for Inclusion

As I have shown in the brief history of Nigerian universities, the westernisation of universities (Grosfoguel, 2013) that granted knowledge production in African universities, has not particularly served the interests of the African people. In revisiting the question of whether there is in fact an African university, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017a) argues, political

decolonisation is incomplete without epistemic decolonisation. In this sense, Mignolo's colonial matrices of power that operate through coloniality/geopolitics of knowledge, are essential in understanding the decolonisation of HE.

The term epistemicide has been coined (Santos, 2017) to describe the process whereby certain knowledge(s), from certain bodies, or places, are erased or relegated to the ebbs of inferiority. This is particularly poignant in the context of disability inclusion, where local knowledge and practices related to disability, have often been marginalised or silenced in most policy texts and literature. As such, decolonising universities necessitates recognising and incorporating these marginalised voices and knowledge systems (Mbembe, 2016). Popal and colleagues, also contend that we must look at the university beyond being a master's tool, especially in the case of Nigerian universities. Instead, it must be seen as a site of power struggle that needs to be 'humbled' (Popal et al., 2020) in the sense of confronting its past (colonialism) and addressing its disquieting future (capitalism) (Santos, 2018). In this regard, Popal et al. (2020) assert that:

> "the university is no longer the new priests, the keeper of the flame of enlightenment. The ones where you have to go to in order to edify yourself and to understand the world. The university then has to actually integrate itself into the communities which it serves, which surround it…open its doors on the assumption of the horizontality in terms of epistemic integrities…" (p. 138)

Calls to "transform" universities through decolonisation, in pursuit of inclusive higher education, come from a range of intersecting perspectives, including critical education studies, decolonial theory, postcolonial perspectives, and disability studies. Decolonisation, thus, emerges as a foundational framework for dismantling oppressive structures and advancing social justice within universities. Scholars in disability studies (Grech, 2015, Kamenopoulou, 2020, Meekosha, 2011) highlight the need for disability studies to engage with the postcolonial locations of disability in the majority of the world. Returning to questions of decolonising methodologies, Tuhiwai Smith (2013) argues that they are primarily meant to disrupt relationships between researchers (mostly non-indigenous) and those being researched (indigenous), between a colonising institution of knowledge and colonised peoples whose own knowledge has been subjugated. She maintained that the imperial legacies of Western knowledge continue to shape knowledge institutions to the exclusion of indigenous peoples and their aspirations (Smith, 2013). In the context of disability inclusion, this involves creating spaces for disability advocacy and participation, ensuring that individuals with disabilities have

a meaningful voice in shaping policies and practices that directly affect their educational experiences.

## 2.6. Students with disabilities in HE

This section examines existing research on disability inclusion in Nigerian universities in relation to other universities around the world. According to 2024-2028 Strategic Roadmap for Inclusive Access to Quality Higher Education, records presented by JAMB show that since 2017, only one-third of the applicants with disabilities have been granted admission into HEIs in the country. In 2019, 44.8% of the 390 candidates were admitted, which was reported to be a significant increase. The majority of these students were admitted to government-funded universities such as the University of Ilorin, Bayero University Kano, University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, University of Nigeria Nsukka, and University of Abuja (JAMB, 2023). In 2020, only 25% of the 351 candidates who sat for the UTME were admitted to various universities. However, in 2021 and 2022, the number of admitted candidates increased to 33% and 38%, respectively. Despite the significant investments made by JAMB and the modest successes achieved through JEOG, it acknowledges that the number of special needs candidates gaining admission into Nigerian tertiary institutions is low, as is the percentage of such students among the general student population. Since the improvement recorded in 2017, there has been very little year-on-year growth, with an average rate of less than 2% (JAMB, 2023).

While statistical information like the one above could be helpful in understanding the "numerical state of things" they also mask the reality of the everyday experience of SWDs, and institutions often use these numbers to downplay the severity of their lack of provision. Gabel and Miskovic (2014) in their study submit that numeric cultural representations can protect the institution from using resources to attend to disability. For instance, when institution positions 'that <1% of students are disabled,' this kind of information lulls the institution into complacency that serves as what they refer to as 'head-in-the-sand response' to the reality of SWDs on campus (Gabel and Miskovic, 2014). Regulatory information, institutional policy, and procedure are also significant features of the students' architecture of containment without adequate intervention (Clemens and Cook, 1999).

### *Transitioning to HE*

For SWDs, access to services and perceptions around access, play a pivotal role in their transition to higher education. A study examining the career aspirations of secondary school students with special needs (Osokoya and Junaid, 2015) found that while many of the study participants aspired to study courses such as medicine, computer science and building construction, students with visual impairment did not opt for science subjects "due to general perception that visually impaired persons can hardly benefit from education especially science subjects" (ibid. p 140). In addition, 5.5% of their sample had no intention of continuing with formal tertiary education which the authors attributed to students' frustration with teachers who they perceived as lacking adequate training on how to support them.

A study looking at the 'successful integration to college' (Shepler and Woosley, 2012) found no significant difference between SWDs and their peers. By contrast, in another study on adaptation to college between disabled and non-disabled students, SWDs scored lower on adaptation measures to the college environment social adjustment and grade point average (Adams and Proctor, 2010). Another study of first year SWDs in Nigerian universities (Nwobodo and Agusiobo, 2018) provides insights into the relationship between school climate, peer relationships and SWDs' academic adjustment. All these findings suggest that the transition to university is more challenging for SWDs than for their peers without disabilities. Other predictors of students' adaptation to university are feelings of isolation and loneliness; increased interpersonal conflicts; financial pressures; self-advocacy skills; and visibility of disability (Adams and Proctor, 2010). Non-disclosure of disability status, especially by students with hidden disabilities, has been traced to students' concerns about differential treatment by staff and students (Olney and Brockelman, 2005): students fear stigmatisation and are concerned about staff and students attitudes; these fears are compounded by the perceived lack of acknowledgement of disabilities as identities (Kranke et al., 2013, Bella and Omigbodun, 2009, Stein, 2013, Majoko, 2018).

In this regard, Olaoye et al. (2017) investigated the attitudes of a group of health sciences undergraduates in a Nigerian university, toward SWDs, exploring how factors like gender, ethnicity, level and programme of study, influence students' attitudes, knowledge and contact

with SWDs. Along similar lines, a study by Ajuwon et al. (2015) examines the attitudes of dental and medical students in Nigeria toward disability issues, revealing both positive and negative attitudes. A significant proportion of undergraduate students and academic staff in a study conducted in a number of Nigerian universities (Ijadunola et al., 2022) had negative attitudes towards students with disabilities. This is in tandem with other studies that have shown that academics are concerned about the enrolment of SWDs into some science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) courses because the academics feel they lack appropriate skills on how to support SWDs ( e.g. Ndlovu, 2019, Onuigbo et al., 2020, Essex, 2018, Chiwandire and Vincent, 2017). According to another study, some university departments and schools lack appropriate facilities such as accessible laboratories and equipment to accommodate SWDs (Mayat and Amosun, 2011). This is similar to a study on access to professional courses by SWDs in South Africa, Ndlovu (2019) found that students with visual impairments are mostly denied entry into medical and engineering courses.

***Baseline Accessibility***

Researchers have estimated that 80% of HEIs in Nigeria do not have disability support units or policies (Onuigbo et al., 2020, Eleweke, 2002, Eleweke, 1999, Soje and Eleweke, 2016). Most HEIs in Nigeria do not have support personnel such as educational audiologists, psychologists, speech and language interpreters, and communication support workers (Soje and Eleweke, 2016). Some studies point out that Nigeria universities have known about the need for assistive facilities for years, yet their campuses remain inaccessible to SWDs due to lack of elevators, automatic doors, ramps and so on (Chiwandire and Vincent, 2017, Sambo et al., 2018, Chijioke et al., 2020, Obiakor and et al., 1990, Etieyibo, 2020). Yet such facilities constitute a baseline for inclusive campuses (Kimball et al., 2016). Another study by Ahmed et al. (2014) revealed poor accessibility of learning structures and facilities, with only the health buildings having ramps. The authors emphasised the need for inclusive accessibility modes in the planning and designing of educational institutions to accommodate both disabled and non-disabled students.

A study by Ihekwoaba et al. (2023) examines the specific challenges faced by SWDs in accessing university library resources, calling for increased awareness and support for students with disabilities, including the provision of assistive technology and resources. The lack of

assistive technology devices is also the focus of two studies (Onuigbo, 2011, Isiaku et al., 2021) about SWDs, recommending the establishment of resource centres with appropriate assistive ICT facilities to enhance internet access. Ihekwoaba et al. (2019) focus on access provision for sight-impaired students (SISs) in Nigerian university libraries. They highlight the importance of accessibility in libraries for effective use of information resources by individuals with disabilities. In addition, Ijadunola et al. (2019) argue that increased awareness of SWDs would require, as a minimum, the establishment of a disability register for students.

The issue of inaccessible campuses has been documented around the world, both in the global North and South. Hadjikakou et al. (2010) provide insight into mobility issues in a Cyprus university while Koca-Atabey et al. (2011) explore the levels of stress experienced by Turkish SWDs in navigating accessibility barriers. Finally, studies from Zimbabwe, Ghana, and Tanzania (Majoko, 2018, Morley and Croft, 2011) investigate the effect of lack of resources for SWD participation in HE. In terms of physical accessibility, Kimball et al. (2016) draw an important connection between equity, quality teaching and universal design of learning (which advocates for multiple means of representation, engagement and actions). Currently, most of the literature on Universal Design for learning is largely theoretical, but as with other aspects discussed in this chapter, good practice for SWDs would also be good practice for those without disabilities (Mino, 2004).

### *Co-curricular Provisions*

There has also been concern about SWDs' participation in co-curricular activities such as sports, placements and entrepreneurial activities. Dada and Ukpata (2017) identify the lack of accessible sport facilities for SWDs, thereby limiting their participation and access to developing marketable skills in sports. Based on the perspectives of SWDs from three Nigerian universities, these authors state that "no university has provision for people with disability in terms of accessible sport facilities". The authors conceptualise this as highly discriminatory, as well as wasting the potential for developing economically rewarding skills in sport. Mogaji and Nguyen (2022) look beyond the university environment, focusing on work placement experiences for SWDs in higher education in Nigeria; they highlight the need for an inclusive learning and working environment, and conclude with a proposed new framework to enhance the work placement experience of students with disabilities. Dakung et al. (2019) investigated

the role of universities in preparing disabled students to become entrepreneurial graduates, highlighting the need for universities to play a role in fostering entrepreneurial skills among disabled students.

These studies demonstrate the multifaceted challenges SWDs face in participating fully as members of the university. These challenges range from limited access to facilities and resources, to negative attitudes and the lack of inclusive educational practices. Collectively, these studies highlight three main themes in relation to SWDs in Nigeria's universities: the need for inclusive education; the importance of positive attitudes toward disabilities; and the removal of physical barriers to educational spaces. Yet, while these studies pay attention to inequalities in terms of provisions for SWDs, there is a dearth of knowledge of how and why universities do disability inclusion.

## 2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the fundamental theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of this thesis. Informed by decolonial praxis, this study has provided a critical gaze on the dominating and universalising tendencies of disability studies and inclusive education that have emerged from the global North. The study's significance is that of contributing to the knowledge about disability and inclusion from the periphery and the 'working' and lived experience of disability as it intersects with other logics of inequalities perpetuated by modernity/coloniality (Grech, 2011).

I have also explored the social model and cultural theory approaches, arguing that disability is a multi-dynamic construct often experienced 'intersectionally', especially by SWDs. Therefore, holding on to a singular model of disability would not be appropriate (Friedensen and Kimball, 2017). A handful of higher education studies have empirically examined disability as it intersects with systems of oppression and other social identities ( e.g. Miller, 2017, Stapleton, 2015, Petersen, 2012, Brégain, 2016, Ndlovu, 2019). However, none of these studies focus on the relationships between institutional cultures and disability-inclusion policies, to understand how inclusion policies are being enacted, and what they might mean in the everyday experience of SWDs. The lack of attention to the intersectional and cultural locations of disability has

contributed to a limited understanding of its relationship to the multifaceted barriers faced by SWDs in higher institutions in the global South. The literature discussed in this chapter on institutional cultures, has shown that people within an institutional culture shape or are shaped by their social and textual relations, as they carry out their everyday work. What remains unclear is how inextricably linked cultural elements, as suggested by institutional theorists, contribute to a holistic understanding of the work that goes into the inclusion of marginalised groups such as SWDs, within an institutional landscape.

# Chapter 3. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

*"Knowledge is socially organised".*

*(D.E Smith 1990)*

## 3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework underpinning the methodological design for the study and the methods used in data generation and analysis. This framework draws from Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Decolonial Theories (DT) to develop an analytical approach I call a *decolonial institutional ethnography* which sets out to explicate how "the colonial matrix of power"(Quijano, 2007) of disability inclusion policy texts is organising the discourse of equity and inclusion in three universities in Nigeria. As I will show in this chapter and the rest of the thesis, a decolonial institutional ethnography takes a reflexive approach to understanding how the trans-local conditions of coloniality coordinate the social relations of inclusion and participation. This framework not only provides me with the route to do sociology that acknowledges how research propagates epistemic injustices, but also offers an opportunity do a reflexive, relational and transformational study that protects the voice of the subject.

After setting out the theoretical landscape for this work, I introduce the three universities I used as study sites, to give a contextual background on why and how they were selected for the study. The data generation methods and nature of data generated are presented, alongside how they were implemented, and the kinds of data generated. I also reflect on my immersion at the main study site, Federal University of Arewa (FUA), discussing the dynamics of negotiating access and recruiting participants, issues of reflexivity, ethically important moments, and data analysis techniques.

## 3.2. Theoretical Framework as Methodology

In this section, I present an overview of how I have used Institutional Ethnography as a method of inquiry to understand the organisation of disability inclusion at three universities in Nigeria. I examine my understanding of the social and its implication for my methodological

decision to proceed as an institutional ethnographer. I examine some theoretical tools provided by IE (such as epistemological and ontological shifts, standpoints, texts, ruling relations and work) by highlighting how they have been translated into my study. I then take a 'decolonial turn' to establish a critical dialogue between IE and decolonial theories, building up to my manifesto for transformative, relational and reflexive sociology with people, which I describe as a *decolonial institutional ethnography*.

### 3.2.1. Institutional Ethnography: What can be known about the social?

The key philosophical debates in knowledge production have been around what we know or believe as social (ontology), how we know what we know (epistemology) and the values we bring to the process of knowing the social (axiology). The 'social' in institutional ethnography (IE), is defined as "people's ongoing activities, viewed under the bearing of their coordination with the activities of others" (Smith, 2005 p. 227). When this distinct form of coordinating people's doing is produced repeatedly, it is referred to as *social organisation* in IE. Institutional Ethnography was developed by the Canadian sociologist Dorothy E. Smith (2006, 2005, 1999, 1990a, 1987), who passed away in 2022. She described IE as a scholarly alternative 'sociology for people.' In her seminal work, Smith defines institutional ethnography as "a sociology that translates that concept into a method of inquiry as IE is not just a methodology, but a *sociology"* (2005 p. 1, emphasis in original). Smith argues that it is important to start writing sociology from where we are in our everyday lives and further explore the social relations and organisations in which we participate but may not be visible to us (ibid, p.1).

Smith argues that what IE strives to do is to ground social science in the actual activities and material conditions of the individual, just as Marx criticised the German Ideologist for "replacing the actual with the conceptual". However, drawing from the works of George Herbert Mead, Mikhail Bakhtin and Michel Foucault, IE does not follow the theoretical coevality of Marxism. As such, IE is a 'materialist' method of mapping out what happens to people by situating social organisation knowledge under the assumption that social relations and structuration occur through texts (Campbell and Gregor, 2002).

IE is also a feminist-inspired ontology, built on the experience of women who have been

marginalised and oppressed not only by the masculinist society, but also silenced by male-dominated mainstream sociology (Smith, 1999, Reid and Russell, 2018, Smith, 1987). Starting as a *Sociology for Women* (Smith, 1987), in response to the essentialist critique of the feminist projects, on the basis that it excludes other forms of oppression such as class, race, disability and coloniality, Smith later advanced the scope of IE to a *Sociology for People* (Smith, 2005). As such, IE posits that people participate knowingly or unknowingly in the processes that organise their lives and others. It then strives to explicate the interface between individual experience and their negotiation within an institutional web of ruling relations.

An 'institution' is conceptualised as a "metaphorical bundle of social relations that cluster around and coordinate specific societal functions such as health care, immigration, security and education" (Ng et al., 2013 p.2). To institutional ethnographers, this definition offers the possibility of examining activities that are associated with more than one institution in the contexts of local sites or work processes, such as a network of agencies or organisations in different locations, together making up an institution. In the case of this study, IE is used to map out the work that goes into the enactment and implementation of disability inclusion policy in the Nigerian HE context, starting from the everyday experience of students with disabilities.

The term IE does not imply the traditional ethnographies of institutions; instead, the 'institutional' in IE, as conceptualised by Smith, is underpinned by practices of ruling relations, defined as trans-local forms of social organisation mediated by reproducible texts and discourses. Institutional ethnography is also a radical departure from traditional ethnography ─ which was historically purposed to interpret cultures of "primitive" societies, (Wolcott, 1999, Geertz, 1996)─ in that IE is concerned with the interpretation of the institutional processes that organise a problematic everyday world, building on Garfinkel's Ethnomethodology and Burawoy's extended case method (Smith, 2001, 2005). Thus, the ethnography in IE is a commitment to people and their actualities: a "commitment to discovering 'how things are actually put together', 'how it works'" (Smith, 2006 p. 1).

As observed by Murray, it is possible for researchers to know how things work through their everyday observations, experiences, discussions with people, and reading. Using IE as an

approach, however, helps them to focus on "textually organised ruling relations", central to understanding how things work (Murray, 2019). With this understanding, IE research can be used to map social relations (Campbell and Gregor, 2002), to show how people's lives are caught up in institutional processes that extend far beyond their immediate locale (Smith, 2005). In essence, the aim of IE research is to:

> "explore the institutional 'powers that be', which are interconnected and embedded in texts of various forms and functions and through these texts people's activities are organised translocally, across time and space"(Murray, 2019 p. 13).

Translocal forms of social organisation in this study are broadly examined under the lens of colonialism, inclusive education policy, disability rights and neoliberal regimes in HE. Several attempts have been made to highlight the conceptual toolkits necessary for doing IE (e.g. Campbell and Gregor, 2002, Smith, 2005, Smith, 2006, Deveau, 2008). However, though scholars agree that no two IE research studies are the same, as Smith pointed out, putting IE into practice must divorce from the theoretical dogmatism that has plagued conventional means of inquiry (Smith, 2006). At the same time, as a newcomer to IE research, it is important to expound how these tools have been helpful in foregrounding my work in IE, and also my contribution to the development of what I call a *decolonial institutional ethnography*.

### *Making the shifts*

I will begin by describing my struggle with the ontological and epistemological shifts necessary to engage with IE as a distinct method of inquiry. Mirroring the Khunian *paradigm shift*, Smith acknowledged that it took her 25 years to make these ontological and epistemological shifts, while developing IE (Smith, 2005 p. 2). This alerts me to the possibility that I might still be caught up in the dominant paradigms that I seek to critique within this work. I began this study by exploring the National Policy on Education, alongside the National Disability Act for Nigeria, which prohibits the discrimination of people with disabilities in Nigeria as they access education and other social services. This initial exploration led me to the ideological understanding that it is only by tinkering with the "discriminative animus" (Smith, 1990b p. 633) or attitudinal barriers, coded in this research as institutional cultures, that we can achieve disability inclusion in the Nigerian HE. However, IE provides an ontology that lays emphasis on actualities, as opposed to giving agency to concepts like "institutional cultures" or "attitudinal barriers". Making an ontological shift, therefore, requires moving away from that

ontology that affords agency to concepts like institutional cultures or social structures to one that gives agency to the embodied knower or experiencer so that we come to understand not necessarily "*why things happen the way they do, but how things happen the way they do"(Deveau, 2008 p. 6, emphasis in original).*

On the other hand, an epistemological shift stems from questioning how we know what we know about the social. My knowledge of disability and inclusion before encountering IE could be regarded as an ideological way of knowing disability, embedded in policy texts on disability inclusion, which essentially puts the problem on the individual and on how to fix them (reinforcing the medicalised discourse of disability). Through engaging in IE, I moved to the understanding that to know how things work beyond the 'authorial intention of policies' (Codd, 1988 p. 237), I must start from what people come to know, which in turn originates from their bodily being and action. This way of knowing about disability and inclusion could be described as the "*experiential way of knowing disability"* (Deveau, 2016 p. 314, emphasis mine). Using people's experience as data to map out how something works could also include using the researcher's experience as a point of entry into the social (Smith, 2005).

### 3.2.2. Whose side are we on when entering the social?

In her major work on IE, Smith introduced her particular understanding of 'standpoint', which she describes as a guiding stance that serves as the point of entry into the 'social', starting from the perspective of a specific group that is being ruled by relations in a society's organisation (Smith, 2005). As a design, it does not subordinate the knowing subject to the objectified forms of knowledge of the society. IE's purpose is not to generalise from a specific group of people; instead, it is a way of 'mapping' and understanding the connections between people, in which the object of analysis is not the people per se but the institutional arrangements organising their relations around an institutional function. IE begins by locating a standpoint in an institutional order. This then provides the guiding perspectives from which that order will be explored.

Adopting an IE approach to explore how "mothering work for schooling" is organised,

Griffith and Smith (2004) started from their experience as single parents, before interviewing several women who had children in elementary schools, to understand the work that parents do to keep the school 'running' and why some families come to be known as deviants. Other IE researchers have also started their explorations from the standpoints of the individuals whose experiences provide the entry point into the problematic or issues under examination. For instance, Deveau started from his experience as a disabled IE researcher seeking workplace accommodation (Deveau, 2016). Marie Campbell started from the experience of disabled people who want to live independently (Campbell, 2000). Stella Ng and colleagues adopted the standpoint of families to understand the integrated work that goes into assessing, creating, implementing and refining/revising an Individualised Education Plan for a child with special needs (Ng et al., 2013). In this study, I started my exploration of the social by taking the standpoint of SWDs in Nigerian universities, to understand how the work on disability inclusion is organised.

Like my study, Jung's work began with the experience of university SWDs seeking accommodation (Jung, 2003). The idea of the standpoint as way in, however, is problematic in other ways. The debate about the theoretical conception of "subjects and subjectivities" which revolve around whether the subject is "located in" (Benhabib, 1995) or "constituted in" (Butler, 1995) the social, cultural and discursive contexts, poses an empirical challenge to what can be known about the subject through experience (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008). In another words, as a method of inquiry starting from the actualities, IE is caught in the web of "transparent account problem" (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000 p. 3) where respondents' accounts are assumed to give direct access to authentic aspects of their experiences and lives. Preceding the Benhabib-Butler debates on the "perceived death of the subject" (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008), Scott argued that one cannot use experience as the basis for knowledge, and that "it is not individuals who have experience but subjects who are constituted through experience" (Scott, 1991b p. 779). This implies that it is difficult to hold on to narrated narratives from experiences, as the only source of knowledge about the social.

Scott's position in this debate is similar to Foucauldian constructionism and Lacanian psychoanalysis, where the subject is seen as a discursive effect. This implies that my participants could be seen as both the process and product of inclusive education discourses. As ethnographers, we are only ever presented with narratives or pseudo-realities, constituted

by discourses (Deveau, 2008). Smith (2005 p. 24) agrees that "the experiential can't be directly translated into the factual" but argues that experience is a valid starting point for discovering how discourse shapes that experience. Thus, IE researchers maintain that experience is real but anchored in discourse, as it is the "point d'appui" through which the ethnographer goes to explicate the institutional processes that shape that experience (Campbell, 1998). Even though Smith agrees that discourse itself is among people's doings, seared into the actualities of their lives and organises their relations, she cautions that IE researchers must be careful of what she calls "institutional capture or discourse, capable of subsuming or displacing experientially based knowledge for ideological knowledge" (Smith 2005, p. 155).

### 3.2.3. Texts and Ruling Relations

Text is another vital element that IE researchers have used to understand the 'ruling relations' of people's activities. Looking beyond the content of a page of a document (e.g. policy document), they focus on the 'generalising effects' of the texts and how these obscure and transform what is known (Marjorie, 2006, DeVault and McCoy, 2006). Smith in her (2005) work, defined ruling relations as

> "that extraordinary or ordinary complex of relations that are textually mediated, that connect us across space and time and organise our everyday lives — the corporations, government bureaucracies, academic and professional discourses, mass media, and the complex of relations that interconnect them" (p. 10).

Smith also states that in the institutional setting, we all participate unthinkingly in these relations of ruling, through what she describes as "text-reader conversation", conditioned by the ongoing replicability of texts (ibid, p.166). A text-reader conversation is a process that translates the actual into the institutional and the institutional back to the actual. It is a distinctive way in which institutional discourse undermines the actualities.

As aptly put by Suarez-Delucchi (2020), a text

> "regulates the course of action in which the subject reads and acts in how the text organises her attention to the world, to others or to a temporal sequence of actions. The text is active in a conversation, bringing meanings from elsewhere to the settings where it is used. The reader is active and becomes organised by the text as she understands what those words mean, informing her thinking and her activities in an institutional process. Her future understanding when reading other institutional texts or events will be organised

and directed by that text-reader conversation." (p. 35).

In my study, I followed texts in their various forms, the big texts and small texts, or in Ball's (2017) terms, the "big-P" policies and the "small-p" policies, ranging from lecture timetables to legislative acts. To examine the 'ruling relations' between the local and extra-local settings (Ng et al., 2013), I started my investigation at the position of 'entry-level informants' ( SWDs in the case of this study), and relayed their experience to the 'level two informants'. This second level group of informants consisted of frontline professionals (Griffith and Smith, 2014) or the *Lipskian* "street-level bureaucrats" (1980) such as Deaf Support Services (DSC) staff, lecturers, counselling support services, and other actors engaged in a 'work process' with entry-level informants. The entry-level informants are the individuals whom I have taken a standpoint with, and whose experiences provide the entry point to the issues under examination. I focused on the social organisation of both acknowledged and unacknowledged work.

### 3.2.4. On the Use of Work

Work, as it has been used contrapuntally by Griffith and Smith (2004) and other IE researchers, refers to both paid and unpaid activities that people perform daily or nightly for and within the institution or elsewhere. This "generous conception of work" (Smith, 2003) allows me to view what SWDs do to secure university admission and to get to class every day/night and back to their hostel as the "policy work" they do in the social organisation of disability inclusion in Nigerian universities. This might include being intentionally friendly in order to find a mobility buddy, training the buddy on how to support them, tracking interpreters, attending lectures in inaccessible buildings, seeking accommodation, preparing for and taking exams without accessible learning materials. As Smith (2005) observes,

> "Work is intentional: it is done in some actual place under definite conditions and with definite resources, and it takes time. The merit of this kind of conception of work is that it keeps you in touch with what people need to do their work as well as with what they are doing" (p. 154).

At the other end of this work spectrum is the work that support staff do to make the university inclusive by negotiating institutional politics of ableism to implement disability inclusion policies. Ahmed (2012) describes this as "diversity work", based on conversations with

diversity practitioners about their experiences of 'doing' diversity work within the higher education sectors in the UK and Australia. The affordances of diversity work means seeing everyday interactions to enact disability inclusion as work, by both the entry-level and second-level participants. Ahmed asserts that:

> "Diversity work could be described as a phenomenological practice: a way of attending to what gets passed over as routine or an ordinary feature of institutional life. We could even say that diversity workers live an institutional life… *Diversity workers work from their institutional involvement. Diversity practitioners do not simply work at institutions, they also work on them*, given that their explicit remit is to redress existing institutional goals or priorities (p. 22 emphasis mine)".

My study builds on this amplification of the "policy work" (Ball et al., 2012) being done by diversity workers, as examined by Ahmed but takes this further, through the use of the IE lens, to understand the contributions of actors within the institution's macro, meso and micro layers, including students themselves. My job as an institutional ethnographer is oriented "not to look for agreement among informants or actors about their work process but the intersections and complementarities of their different accounts in the relations that coordinate their work" (Smith, 2005 p. 63), because it is taken for granted that social relations and organisations will generate differences. The problematic(s) — which is the point of 'disjuncture' between actualities of experience and intentions of protocols and policies — is the complexities of including and accommodating SWDs in a higher institution, through the enactment of national and institutional policies on disability inclusion. My aim through adopting an IE lens in this study was to identify the individual-institutional interface, that is, the areas or instances in which students' lived actualities meet and interact with 'the institutional' and where disjuncture occurs.

### 3.2.5. The Decolonial Turn

If IE is sociology *for* people, the dialogue between postcolonial and decolonial theories is what Gurminder K. Bhambra (2014a) would call 'connected sociologies' of the colonised Other, that became necessary as consequences of the depredation of colonialism. In what Ashcroft et al. (2003) described as the 'empire writes back', postcolonial theories have been 'pigeonholed' as 'Third World Studies' from emerging fields such as minority discourse, African Studies, Latin American studies, Subaltern studies, Caribbean studies and so on. To

Grosfoguel, this is because the majority of postcolonial writers situated in North, with the exceptions of South Asian Subaltern studies, were producing studies about the subaltern rather than studies *with* and *from* a subaltern perspective. In other words, the theory or the locus of enunciation in these studies was still located in the North, while the subjects to be studied were located in the South (Grosfoguel, 2011). This was also noted when Claude Ake declared that social science in Africa is an imperialism that has only served the interest of the metropole (Ake, 1982). This means that while postcolonial and feminist studies were able to establish that knowledge is situated (Haraway, 1988), they could not move the locus of enunciation (Grosfoguel, 2011). The locus of enunciation, as described by Grosfoguel, is the "geo-political and bio-political locations of the subject that speaks" (2011, p.5). He further argues that western sciences have hidden, concealed and erased the subject that speaks from what he described as the "ego-politics of knowledge, which produces the myth of "truthful universal knowledge" (ibid p.5).

Postcolonial scholars have been preoccupied with dismantling the power of the universal. Edward Said, in his seminal study, Orientalism, critiqued the

> "idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness, usually overriding the possibility that a more independent, or more skeptical, thinker might have had different views on the matter (p. 1978)."

The ideation of the universal has been made possible, according to Bhambra, by "the analytic bifurcation of the world and an elision of that bifurcation"(Bhambra, 2014b). This analysis echoes Fanon's (2001) "Manichean delirium", also rooted in the idea that colonial powers create a distorted and polarised understanding of the world to maintain control. In the context of colonialism, this delirium involves the reduction of complex human experiences and relationships into simplified categories of "us versus them," "coloniser versus colonised," or "civilised and uncivilised". Postcolonial theories, as Bhabha observes, are not about the enunciation of these separatist trajectories, but the study of the totality of 'texts' (like IE) that hegemonise other cultures (Bhabha, 2012). It is about writing back to displace and interrogate subaltern, post-slavery, disabling and postcolonial narratives, and the critical theoretical perspectives they engender: what Gayatri Spivak has called "our ideological acceptance of error as truth"(Spivak, 2012).

An epistemic departure from this dichotomic discourse, is the concept of "colonial power matrix" or coloniality of power, proposed by Latin American scholars in what has now become decolonial thinking or theories. The "colonial power matrix" (developed by a Peruvian sociologist, Anibal Quijano), is described as an organising principle involving exploitation and domination exercised in multiple dimensions of social life, from economic, sexual or gender relations, to political organisations, structures of knowledge, state institutions and households (Quijano, 2000). Mignolo (2002) argues that "colonial difference" highlights the "consequence of coloniality of power", which allows for differentiation, classification and hierarchisation of the colonised/colonisers and then morphed under different global designs, such as Christianisation, civilising missions, post-WWII development, neoliberalism, globalisation and internationalisation (Bendix, 2018). I have engaged with the analysis of this work from a "colonial difference" perspective, as it allows me to take cognisance of the ideological/symbolic strategies as well as the colonial/racist culture of the modern/colonial world, referred to in IE as the extra-local ruling relations. While most world-system analysis in HE focuses on how globalisation, neoliberalism and governance structures of global higher education policies coordinate the implementation of policies in the local, I would like to see these structures as the "colonial matrix of power", extra-locally coordinating the implementation of inclusive systems of higher education, particularly in Nigeria.

Proponents of decolonial theories ( see for example, Quijano (2000, 2007); Grosfoguel (2007, 2011); Mignolo (2002, 2018, 2007); Maldonado- Torres (2007); and Ndlovu- Gatsheni (2017b, 2019, 2012) have in different contexts, contributed to the theorising of concepts like *coloniality of being*, *coloniality of power*, *coloniality of knowledge*, and *coloniality of nature,* as the prominent forms of coloniality that decoloniality seeks to address. While these concepts are interlaced, I seek to explore the impacts of colonialities of being and of power. For Maldonado-Torres (2007), coloniality of being refers to the lived experience of coloniality and its impact on the language, self-determination, body, and culture of the colonised. Mbembe (2001) goes further in considering not only how coloniality of power lays claim to the being of its subjects through coercion and violence, but how that 'coercive' power compels its subjects to rearticulate that power, to confer grandeur on that power, and to do this through the conviviality of that power. He argues that the postcolonial 'subject' mobilises not just a single 'identity,' but several fluid

identities which, by their very nature, must constantly be 'revised' to achieve maximum instrumentality and efficacy, as and when required (Mbembe, 1992).

Thus, a decolonial institutional ethnography is one that takes a reflexive approach to understanding how the translocal conditions of coloniality coordinate the social relations of inclusion and participation. For the purposes of this study, I have turned to IE and decolonial theories not because they provide me a map for doing a sociology that delinks from the existing hegemonic ways of doing research that propagates epistemic and relational injustices; rather, it has provided a means by which to conduct a reflexive, relational and transformational study that shifts the locus of enunciation to the marginalised and Othered identities in the Nigerian higher education space.

### 3.3. Exploring a Quintain: Institutional Ethnography and the Multi-case Study Approach

By translating sociology into a method of inquiry, IE conceptualises an institution as a cluster of relations or a ball of threads around a particular societal function. This function or phenomenon is what Robert Stake (2006) also describes as a "quintain". A quintain is an object or phenomenon or condition to be studied. It could be an organisation where its different parts are studied, or a campaign where its instances are studied or something that we want to understand more thoroughly, and we choose to study it through its cases, by means of a multicase study (Stake, 2006). The quintain for this study is the social organisation of disability inclusion in the Nigerian HE. In this exploration of the everyday experience of SWDs across three universities in Nigeria (Federal University of Arewa , Kosigi State University, and Alenje Private University, all in the same state), the use of the multicase approach together with IE, allowed me to map the social, political, and structural relations of disability inclusion policy.

Ownership in these cases is different: the three universities are Federal, State and Private respectively. However, they operate within the same policy environment in terms of enacting the same policy texts for disability inclusion in HE. Federal University of Arewa (FUA) is the only site where students, people, activities, policies, strengths, problems or relationships, are studied in detail. In other words, it forms the target case where the most attention has been directed (Stake, 2006). The other two cases are used to extend our understanding of how universities "do" disability inclusion in Nigeria and illustrate how contexts shape policies.

Thus, this study proceeds as a critical exploration of the enactment of disability inclusion policies, in "similar but different" contexts (Ball et al., 2012). It is therefore important to note that while the functional and structural equivalences were not considered in the building of cases, comparison is inevitable (Stake, 2006). This is especially important at the horizontal level, where I have compared the policy representation and apparatuses available for disability inclusion across the three cases.

### 3.3.1. The Use of Institutional Ethnography

IE has been used in healthcare, residential care, refugee services and among nursing professionals — see for example, Adams (2017), Jakubec (2015), Reid and Russell (2018), Johnson (2016), Parada et al. (2020). In disability studies, Deveau (2016) employed IE to portray how textually mediated disability discourse paralyses people in a workplace in Canada, while Ng et al. (2013) used IE in mapping the social organisation of work processes occurring in the healthcare and special education interface in the UK. Devi et al. (2020) have used IE to investigate the efficiency of supported decision-making for persons with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities.

In higher education settings, Matsau (2013) used IE to explore race and gender equity in three universities in South Africa. Rosabal-Coto (2016) dissected the postcolonial music education curriculum in Costa Rica using IE. A study by Gabel and Miskovic (2014) used IE to show how institutions use discourse and texts to 'contain' disability experiences in higher education. Using IE [OBJ] showed the impact of accounting discourse on institutional transformation and restructuring of the Ontario college system. Parson and Steele (2020) employed IE to understand if and how institutional factors contribute to understanding the discourses that create challenges for marginalised and underrepresented groups in STEM in HE in Hungary. Murray (2020) used IE to explore the UK university audit and accountability processes. She analysed three higher-order texts, namely, the National Student Survey (NSS), the Economic and Social Research Council Research Grant (ESRC-RG) funding application, and the Research Excellence Framework (REF). She explicated how and why these three national processes were enacted very differently at local levels by academics and other front-line staff in different universities, disciplines and departments.

While IE has thus far not been used in Nigeria in the HE studies I have identified, it has been used in other institutional contexts. Owen (2012) uses IE to investigate Nigeria's Police Force working processes. Another study (McNamara and Morse, 2004) examines the power dynamics between Northern-based donors and Nigerian-based non-governmental development organisations. Tchoukou (2020) used the textuality of ruling relations to uncover the problem of cultural violence against girls, as seen in the practice of child marriages in Nigeria. Using IE in the Nigerian HE context allows me to examine the 'intentional and emergent coordination' that goes on in pursuing equitable opportunities and participation for SWDs. Likewise, it provides a lens through which to analyse the unintentional coordination or work relations (Ng et al., 2013) of policy enactment that occur as people from all walks of life go about routine activities in workplaces and elsewhere. This study was carried out while the COVID-19 pandemic was subsiding worldwide. As such, it also offers an ethnographic "post-pandemic" account on how HE provisions have been shaped by the pandemic, and the impact it had on the experience of SWDs within the Nigerian HE context.

### 3.3.2. Introducing the Cases

The three case studies built for this study include the Federal University of Arewa (FUA) Kosigi State University (KSU) and Alenje Private University (APU) (All pseudonyms). As I set out to understand how universities in Nigeria implement policies on disability inclusion, I paid attention to school ownership or funding arrangement of universities. Within a neo-liberalised world-system of HE, the governance structure could explain the diversity or convergence in how issues of equity and inclusion in higher education are pursued. These three universities are in the same state, some kilometres apart. As I will show later in this chapter and subsequent chapters, they share isomorphic convergence and legitimacy, partly because most of the principal officers of KSU and APU were former or current staff of FUA, which is the main locus of this study. My initial appraisal aided my selection of FUA as the major study site because as a federal government-funded university, it has a record of admitting SWDs and has a deaf support centre (DSC), to support the experience of students entering the university. KSU and APU, by contrast, do not have centres for support services as separate

entities within their organisations. KSU, a state government-funded university, does have a special education department which renders support services, mainly for SWDs on the course. APU is a private university with a support service located within the general studies unit, with a casual support staff that does the planning and delivers educational support for SWDs on its campus.

### *Federal University of Arewa (FUA)*

FUA is one of the second-generation universities founded in 1975 to complement existing federal universities established through the Ashby Commission. This institution has diverse enrolment, an existing practice of inclusion of admitting SWDs, and the availability of a DSC. This support service unit was introduced by the Federal Government in 1989 to support the inclusion and participation of students with hearing impairment, who were formerly being funded to travel to Gallaudet University in the US to acquire university education (DSC, 2016). The university is a semi-residential university, owned and funded by the federal government, with about 60,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students. About 25% of the student population stays on campus, while the remaining 75% stays in towns and communities clustered around the university environment. In line with the federal character principle, it has a "national outlook" as it hosts almost every ethnic group in Nigeria. It also admits students from neighbouring West African countries, priding itself as inclusive and one of Nigeria's most international campuses. With about 59% of the students offering STEM subjects, with male students dominating STEM and Art/Humanities subjects, FUA enrols students from all states in Nigeria (FUA, 2019). FUA has disability and counselling units in charge of the accommodation and participation of students with disabilities. Having been in operation for a while, the DSC has graduated a hundred self-identified SWDs. It was in the DSC that I commenced my exploration of the study of how things are being done at FUA.

### *Kosigi State University (KSU)*

Kosigi was approved by the NUC in 2009 as a state university. It commenced activities that same year with the mission to "build human competence to advance the cause of humanity". Its slogan is to strive to be a "centre for community service and entrepreneurship" with the motto as "The University for Community Development" (KSU, 2015, p 1.) To achieve this, it has created a centre for community development which oversees the community

engagements of the university. It has three campuses, with the main campus of KSU sited in a village in the Northside of the state and a student population of about 25,000 students. The main campus hosts Colleges of Pure and Applied Sciences, College of Information and Technology and College of Education. According to the university, its staff composition consists of professors from MIT, Harvard and Princeton, and most of the academics have had one or two degrees in Europe and America (KSU, 2015). Showcasing its profile of international staff is part of achieving the dream of being a "world-class university".

I was hosted at KSU in the Department of Special Education which offers a degree programme for training special needs teachers, who will work in schools and in the communities. This department gave a clearer understanding of the content of training that support staff and special needs teachers receive. Apart from the traditional focus of the department, the training programme is also strong in the philosophy and practice of inclusive education policy. The department started admitting student in 2012 and states in its handbook (KSU, 2015) that it is committed to training specialist teachers with the skills to meet special educational needs, as well as addressing barriers to learning for all pupils. It focuses on sensory and non-sensory impairments, intellectual disabilities, emotional and behavioural disorders, dyslexia and dyscalculia. With this international outlook, KSU prides itself as the hub ready to prepare specialists to achieve the "special needs and inclusive education movement of the country" in accord with the National Policy on Education (KSU, 2015 p. 29).

***Alenje Private University (APU)***

Established by an Islamic foundation, APU was one of the private universities granted operating license by the federal government of Nigeria in 2005 to provide conventional higher education in the state of Kosigi. It began academic activities with the initial enrolment of about 100 students, across core colleges of humanities, management and natural sciences. These disciplinary groups are the core areas of provision of most private universities in Nigeria, as they require less infrastructural facilities to get accreditation, even though the National Policy on Education stipulates 60:40 academic quota in favour of science and technology (FGN, 2013). APU has now added four additional faculties to include Law, Education, Health Sciences and Agriculture, to make seven faculties and a postgraduate college, all offering 50 undergraduate, 12 diploma, and 43 postgraduate programmes (APU, 2020).

As a relatively young university with an entrepreneurial inclination, APU is the main private university in the city serving professionals and people wanting to update their skills and knowledge, without going through the hurdles of government owned institutions. For instance, out of the 12 APU centres, six are tailored around lifelong and professional learning such as the Centres for Part-time and Professional Studies, Diploma Studies, JUPEB Studies, ICT and Distance Learning (APU, 2020). APU's administration system is quite centralised, with all important decision makers of the university hosted in a two-storey building. With about 7000 students, APU has all its programmes accredited by the National Universities Commission (NUC). The university operates three campuses, two in the capital of Kosigi, the other in the hometown of the founder. My research at APU was at the main campus (APU, 2014).

In addition to its responsibility for examining general studies courses, the Directorate of General studies Unit at APU main campus, is also in charge of the support services for students with disabilities. This unit manages the academic needs of SWDs by employing and assigning a support staff who follows the student to classes and events of importance. The unit has only one staff as of the time of the study. While the staff member has supportive service as his primary responsibility, he is also answerable to other duties related to the General Studies unit, such assigning lecturers to about 14 GNS courses, follow- up on assessment and examination results, and general queries from studies, including missing scripts and results (Interview, Mr Amubieya APU).

### 3.3.3. Data Generation Methods in Institutional Ethnography

As I have shown above, higher education provision in Nigeria is being delivered by the federal government, state government and private individuals and groups. The state in which the fieldwork took place is home to one federal university, one state-owned university and some private universities. While I worked with FUA, KSU and APU throughout the study period, FUA remained the primary study site. This is the site where I conducted most of the fieldwork

activities, due to the size, age and availability of structured institutional apparatus to deliver disability inclusion policies.

Institutional ethnography, like other qualitative approaches, uses the methods routinely employed for data generation, namely, observation, interviews and document analysis. Negotiating access to data with the gatekeepers of FUA was a continuous process throughout the fieldwork, and this was gained over time, through different kinds of collaborative engagements with colleagues/informants (Karsten, 2020). As shown and later developed below, many strands of data generation methods were used in this study: observation/shadowing, online open-ended surveys, soliciting documents and diary and in-depth interviews, for a total period of six months at FUA, KSU and APU, with most time spent on FUA campus.

I have chosen to use the term "data generation" throughout this thesis because I believe collecting or generating data is not just a matter of semantics or synonyms. It comes from the acknowledgement that research has been historically used to further oppress the people I worked with at my study sites. Data collection involves generating data from those who can't make sense of it. As such, it furthers the colonial extraction of raw data from the so-called global South, to be refined in the global North. On the other hand, generating also implies 'making' and 'creating' the data, carrying within it the notions of agency of the researcher as well as the research participants. I see it as a nested site of struggle where different kinds of values, gazes, lenses and interests are brought to bear by all parties in the research process.[6] Collection doesn't quite capture the reality of the field as I have experienced it.

### *Observation*

With my stay in the hall of residence at FUA, my data generation began with the purposive shadowing of students' activities on campus. At the time when I arrived at FUA, they had just returned from a national union strike and closure of the university due to COVID; the first semester of the disrupted session was about to be completed and I therefore arrived in the

[6] For an extended discussion of research as a site of struggle in a colonial context, see Linda Tuhiwai Smith's Decolonising Methodologies.. Smith, L. T. 2013. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Zed Books Ltd.

middle of the examination period at FUA. A couple of my observation sessions started at the Computer Based Tests (CBTs) centre of the university. I would leave my room in the morning to capture how students arrived at the campus and moved to their examination centres. I also observed night classes and library activities, where students prepared for their exams. This was to build relationships, speak to students about my activities on campus, and facilitate my access to SWDs in university. While I could study some salient cultures of the university by attending university events such as inaugural lectures, convocation ceremonies, and religious activities, I was unable to recruit participants for my study through these activities. I later situated my work at the Deaf Support Centre and approached student representatives of SWDs by meeting them to discuss my research and what I intended to do on campus. A detailed section on how I recruited my participants is presented in section 3.3.4.

Shadowing was efficient as an observational method in the early days of my work at FUA, as it allowed me to follow my participants to some functions on campus and understand their everyday work (Ng et al., 2013). However, it was not possible with some deaf students, especially female participants who did not want to be followed by a male researcher. I then employed solicited-diary, as ethnographers uphold that participants keeping a diary of their daily activities can count as self-observation, as they are written by the participants reflecting on issues that are of interest to the researcher (Jacelon and Imperio, 2005). Participant observation and shadowing enabled me to escape what Smith (2005) refers to as the risk of "rearticulating institutional ideology" (p. 156), by merely analysing documents or interviewing participants.

Data obtained through observation, shadowing, and the context in which the process was taking place (see Appendix A for observation checklist), were recorded in my fieldnotes (Ng et al., 2013). I started most of my observation with seating arrangements so as to keep track of where everyone in the room was located, including me. I paid special attention to building structures, classroom organisation, and how SWDs walked and worked around these spaces (Spradley, 2016). This coverage of the spatial relations of SWDs helped in my vivid recalling of events and conversations for my data analysis; it also led me to request and obtain necessary documents, such as the university's accessibility audit, to know the level of accessibility at FUA

and what the university is doing to make learning spaces inclusive(Campbell and Gregor, 2002).

I kept two types of notes for observation: one was a digital OneNote on a Samsung S7 Galaxy Tablet, saved in my cloud account; the other was a paper notebook that I used in taking notes of my observation during classroom activities. I decided not to do classroom observation with my Tablet because I realised the need to minimise being a source of distraction, or even a spectacle, while writing on my Tablet in the classroom. Everywhere I went during the day was a source of data, as I would take a mental note of what was said and what I heard before going back to the desk I was given at the centre or to my room to write my daily journal. My classroom observations were based on invitations from the staff and students, so I kept my observations to one or two per day. These observation sessions were then written in narrative formats in my notes, because I felt this was the most appropriate way to keep institutional relations in focus (Smith, 2006). Appendix B is a long excerpt of my observation notes at the CBT centre on the 28th of October 2021.

### *Texts*

Texts in IE are said to be 'speakers in conversation' (Smith, 2005) that readers enter when they engage with these texts(Campbell and Gregor, 2002). These 'textual conversations' are standardising elements in the everyday relations of any institution. They often come in different forms, ranging from printed documents like standardised government forms, protocol reports, drawings, photographs, or virtual replications of these documents (Marjorie, 2006, DeVault and McCoy, 2006). The first source of data for data analysis were texts. Textual analysis can be based on the organising effects of texts, classified as either higher-order texts or low-order texts. In most cases, low-order texts take authority by re-interpreting or retrofitting the higher-order texts. In this study, the texts were collected and analysed using a multi-level categorisation (See table 1).

Data generation through document analysis was done by following documents like the national policy documents on disability, the university's strategic plan for inclusion, faculty disability protocols and departmental reports, DSC reports on SWDs. During interviews or

conversations, I would request to see a certain document mentioned by students, academics, DSC staff, and any other participants. Effort was made to de-identify records and protect personal data and confidentiality (Ng et al., 2013). Following a document, as described by IE researchers, includes paying attention to how people interpret and act with the document. It is worth noting how I retrieved the university's accessibility audit report by initiating a request to the Director of the University's Physical Planning Unit (PPU). This experience also became very useful ethnographically, as I was able to observe how the university works with the National Commission for People with Disabilities in implementing the National Disability Act.

| **Level** | **Texts** | **Location** |
|---|---|---|
| Macro | UNESCO Salamanca statement, UNCRPD 2006 and its 2010 Protocol, National Policy on Education, National Disability Act, National Policy on Special Education, NUC Annual Statistical Digests, JAMB's Annual Reports and Weekly Bulletins. | UNESCO, United Nations, FGN, MOE, National Commission for People with Disabilities, National University Commission (NUC), Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). |
| Meso | FUA's Strategic Plans (2003-2023), KSU Strategic Plan (2014-2019), APU's Strategic Plan (2014-2018), FUA's Annual reports, Accessibility Audit, Students Handbooks, DSC Handbook, Data on SWDs Admission, News Bulletins, Hostel | Academic Planning Units of Case Studies, Deaf Support Centre, Websites, Admission Office, Student Affairs Unit, |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Accommodation Requests, Meeting Reports. | |
| Micro | Students Request for Personnel Provision, Request for Waiver, Diaries, Request for Donation of Assistive Technology, Legislative Bill, Timetable. | Students, Student leaders, Students Associations, Students Union. |

*Table 1 : Documents solicited and used in this study*

***Interviews***

Institutional ethnographic research places a significant emphasis on interviewing, as articulated by DeVault (2006) and Smith (2005), considering it a means of 'talking with people' to comprehensively grasp their experiences. The primary objective of these interviews was to explore the practices and work relationships at FUA, KSU, and APU (See Appendix C for interview schedules). The trans-local relations, discourses, and institutional processes shaping informants' daily work were identified through continuous analysis of interviews. Due to ongoing data generation and practical constraints, a single interview session was conducted with all participants. Nevertheless, subsequent informal discussions were held, particularly with staff at the DSC. Additionally, one interview session each was conducted with DSC staff, academics, and school managers, all of which were tape-recorded and transcribed (Norstedt and Breimo, 2016, Ng et al., 2013, Rankin, 2017)

Verbatim transcription of interviews, involving a word-for-word reproduction of audio-recorded verbal data, was carried out for in-depth interviews with SWDs, Support Staff, and Academic Managers (MacLean et al., 2004, Poland, 1995). Informal interviews were selectively transcribed (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006). Commencing the transcription in Nigeria proved challenging, due to fieldwork activities and unreliable power supply. A complete transcription was undertaken upon returning from Nigeria, facilitating a more rigorous engagement with the data. However, the transcription process, while valuable for data analysis, also presented

challenges. Smith (2005, p. 138) notes that researchers engage in a secondary interpretative dialogue during transcription, making it susceptible to language errors (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006) and misrepresentations, especially in cases of poor audio quality (MacLean et al., 2004). Transcription averaged six-seven hours per hour of interview, with each transcript spanning 6-14 A4 single-spaced pages for a participant.

Exploring transcription software, I experimented with Microsoft (MS) Teams but encountered only 20% accuracy, necessitating extensive manual editing. Voice recognition software (VRS) inaccuracies were attributed to background noises and the diverse 'Nigerian English accents' of speakers of my own and those of my participants (Amuda et al., 2014). I opted for manual transcription to reduce the risk of omitting crucial data and allow for contextualisation (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006). Although resource-intensive, manual transcription was preferred over outsourcing, given the benefits of enhanced familiarity with the data, facilitating a more streamlined analysis process, and the opportunity to document my reflections during the data analysis.

This decision, however, came with emotional labour, as I grappled with distancing emotions from the poignant stories of SWDs navigating university life. Balancing my roles as the researcher, interviewer, and transcriber in reciprocal relationships, can render the researcher emotionally vulnerable while reliving the conversation (Lalor et al., 2006, Gregory et al., 1997) . Post-transcription, the edited and de-identified transcripts were transferred to the Computer Aided Software for Data analysis and management, Nvivo.

| Case | Students with Disabilities | Volunteers | Support Staff | Administrative Staff | Academic Staff | Principal Officers And Managers | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FUA | 21 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 14 | 57 |
| KSU | 2 | Nil | 1 | Nil | 4 | 2 | 9 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| APU | 0 | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 23 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 11 | 17 | 69 |

*Table 2: Distribution of Interviews conducted across the 3 study sites*

### 3.3.4. Data Generation Activities at FUA

#### *Negotiating Access*

To immerse myself in the campus life of FUA, I sought approval from the Vice-Chancellor (VC) for research and on-campus accommodation. I submitted a request, along with an introductory letter from my supervisor, ethics approval from UEA, and a research information brochure. After a month of follow-up, the registrar accepted my request on behalf of the VC, stipulating the need for ethical review by the university's research committee. During the approval process, I involved key figures at FUA, copying in the Dean of Student Affairs and the Director of the Deaf Support Centre (DSC). This strategic approach, influenced by insights from a university staff member and my knowledge of federal universities in Nigeria, was crucial. As I needed university-approved accommodation and access to the DSC, informing key figures facilitated a smoother approval process. The gatekeeper's approval hinged on ethical clearance, prompting me to inquire about the application process during my first meeting with the DSC Director. While awaiting committee approval, I familiarised myself with the university and DSC staff, conducting preliminary observations. After three weeks, the committee granted clearance, enabling me to engage with the DSC's deputy directors and subsequently, to meet with student clusters.

The DSC works with three main groups: hearing impaired (HI), visually impaired (VI), and physically impaired (PI) clusters. I briefed cluster leaders on my research, and I was able to establish organic relationships that led to invitations to their residence halls, classes, discussions, and social events. These interactions facilitated conversations with cluster members, who volunteered to share their experiences. Communicating with the hearing-impaired cluster, despite my beginner-level American Sign Language proficiency, posed challenges initially. However, interactions via WhatsApp and note writing, coupled with my

commitment to learning signs, facilitated access to the Deaf community. Conversely, visually impaired students faced challenges in accessing readable materials, prompting my voluntary assistance to help them manage the resource room. This gesture, appreciated by the Association of Visually Impaired Students (AVIS), led to positive feedback from VI students, emphasising the significance of my support. Beyond the three clusters under the DSC's purview, I engaged with a student with albinism, recruited through a peer who was aware of my interest in exploring disability clusters not currently covered by the university's inclusion policy. This student's unique experience added nuance to my understanding of support services and the meaning of inclusion for them.

### *Data Generation*

At FUA, I observed a range of activities, including five classroom sessions, SWDs association meetings, university events, student union elections, campaign activities, debates, students' legislative sittings, press conferences, night classes, religious gatherings, and hostel parties. Additionally, I examined various documents and texts, such as the National Disability Gazette from a government agency, four editions of the university's strategic plans since 2003 to trace the evolution of the university's disability inclusion policy, annual reports, news bulletins, self-assessment study forms for NUC accreditation, student and departmental handbooks, and diaries from students. I also reviewed FUA's accessibility audit report by the NCPWD, JAMB's circular on accommodation provision for visually impaired students in mathematics-related courses, and letters from students requesting accommodation and provisions.

I conducted a total of 21 in-depth interviews with self-identified students with visual, hearing, physical impairments, and albinism. I also conducted five interviews with student volunteers working with students with disabilities, ten interviews with disability support staff, hostel staff, and students' affairs officers, and seven interviews with academic staff who double as academic advisers for SWDs. Additionally, I interviewed fourteen principal officers of the university, including the vice-chancellor. All fifty-seven interviews at FUA were a mix of audio-recorded semi-structured and informal interviews, except for interviews with hard of hearing students, where open-ended diaries were employed to explore their campus and virtual learning experiences. The semi-structured interviews averaged 30 minutes, conducted in various settings such as the resource room provided by the DSC for student interviews, staff offices

for staff interviews, and virtual meetings on Microsoft Teams, when disruptions or mobility challenges were present.

| Types of Data | Descriptions |
|---|---|
| **Observation** | Classroom observation, inaugural lectures, students' meetings, manifestos, examination proceedings, convocation ceremony, press events, night classes, religious gatherings, and hostel parties. |
| **Texts** | Strategic Plans since 2003, Handbooks, annual reports, news bulletins, reports, accessibility audits, statistical digests of SWDs admission, letters in various by students and staff, timetables. |
| **Interviews** | Informal and formal interviews with students, volunteers, support staff, accommodation staff, academic staff, and principal officers. |

*Table 3 : Data Generated at FUA*

### 3.3.5. Data Generation Activities at KSU and APU

My engagement with KSU and APU commenced following discussions with staff and academic managers at FUA, where insights into their inter-institutional relations were shared. Subsequently, I sought and obtained gatekeepers' approval and ethical clearances at both KSU and APU. Students on both campuses were on holiday and some were preparing for exams, due to differences in academic calendars compared to FUA where I could focus on the examination of students' day-to-day experiences. Thus, I directed my efforts toward comprehending, at an organisational level, how these universities implement the government's

disability inclusion policy and formulate support strategies for the inclusion and participation of students with disabilities. This comparative analysis is presented in chapter 5, as the rest of the thesis focuses on the everyday experience of students at FUA.

***Data Generation at KSU***

While at KSU, I was in a department dedicated to training special needs teachers and workers, specifically focusing on equipping students to manage low and high-incidence disabilities in the classroom. Notably, two students with hearing impairment enrolled in the special education degree course. The department at KSU is equipped with a resource room and staffed by two specialists — a sign language interpreter and a braille expert. While there, I observed two classroom activities and gathered relevant documents, including the university's strategic plans and student handbooks. Moreover, I conducted semi-structured interviews with two heads of departments and four lecturers within the special education department. Additionally, I engaged in informal discussions with two students with hearing impairment, although this turned out to be limited in terms of gaining insights into their perspectives and experiences.

| Types of Data | Descriptions |
|---|---|
| Observation | Two classroom observations and scanning of the environment. |
| Texts | University's strategic plan and departmental handbook. |
| Interviews | Interviews with staff, and academic managers. |

*Table 4: Data Generated at KSU*

***Data Generation at APU***

As I was concluding my study at FUA, an industrial strike action commenced in February 2022, initiated by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), followed by the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU). This event led to the complete closure of most federal and state funded universities in the country. Consequently, I redirected my focus towards working with individuals at KSU and APU, as their staff did not partake in the industrial action.

While at APU, I was in the general studies unit, responsible for overseeing disability support services. Unfortunately, I could not observe classes as the students were on a sessional break. Nevertheless, I collected pertinent documents from the academic planning unit, including data on the admission rate of students with disabilities, programme handbooks, and the university's strategic plans. In addition to document collection, I conducted three semi-structured interviews, each with a disability officer, a senior assistant registrar, and a university planning officer, respectively.

| Types of Data | Descriptions |
|---|---|
| Observation | Environmental scanning of campus. |
| Texts | Strategic plan and data on admission of SWDs |
| Interviews | Interviews with a support staff, administrative staff and principal planning officer. |

*Table 5 : Data Generated at APU*

### 3.4. Reflexivity in Institutional Ethnography

For this research to lay claim to objectivity or neutrality is to posit that knowledge is "unconditioned by its body or space location" (Grosfoguel, 2013 p.76). It is essential to articulate the perspective in which I construct my analysis, by stating the 'I' in this research. During my interviews, I made sure to introduce myself to my interlocutors, and I answered

students' questions around who I am and why I am interested in disability inclusion. My predilections in this research and my relationship with the subject matter, are informed by the intersectional positions that I occupy as an 'able-bodied' special needs teacher, a community facilitator, a sociological researcher (with all the historical baggage) and a middle-class (I did not realise this until I was in the field) male. With almost a decade of 'working' with SWDs, I became particularly unsettled about the intersectionality of the experience of students living within disabling spaces, when admitted into my bachelor's degree programme. Throughout my stay in the university environment, SWDs participated and survived on 'charity' to attain their degrees, as I have narrated in Chapter 1. Following Marx's view that charity is the perfume of the sewers of capitalism, SWDs on campus were subjected to charity's bitter/sweet interventions (Goodley, 2016). They worked for their own inclusion and diversity [OBJ], as their stay on campus was precarious and unwelcome.

As social scientists, we are often attracted to issues that are dear to our hearts or experience (Becker, 1967). This attraction created a metaphorical gossamer wall (Doucet, 2018a) between my past experience of supporting and living with SWDs, and the present of researching their everyday life. I often tell myself and others how I became interested in this area of research, using some of these stories from my past. My "shadow others and biographical ghosts" (Doucet, 2018b p. 47)came to haunt me as I was interviewing others and coming to know their stories. I was also confronted with the difficulty of determining where the stories of characters from my past end and the stories of my informants begin.

So, what does "reflexivity" mean for "academic homecomers" (Oriola and Haggerty, 2012) like me, who have been educated in the countries of the global North, going to research or engage communities in the South? Drawing on Andrea Doucet, reflexivity in this study is used as a way of "reflecting on, and understanding our own personal, political and intellectual biographies as a researcher and making explicit our location in relation to our research respondents"(Doucet, 2018a p. 47). It also refers to our critical role in creating, interpreting, and theorising research data (Doucet, 2018b, Maton, 2003) or Bourdieu's invitation to *reflexive sociology* that requires we take the "field" seriously (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). I elaborate on how I employ a reflexive data analysis strategy called Listening Guide later in this chapter.

### 3.4.1. Biographical Reflexivity

While IE acknowledges the issues of power asymmetries in interviewing and observing informants, it does not really offer the tools to confront these power dynamics, so the dichotomy remains. As the researcher or interviewer, we have the power over the referential content of what is said, the length and scope of answers and the way all participants construct their positionality, with respect to the interview and information it produces (Smith, 2005 p. 137 ). Smith argues that IE researchers should therefore recognise the authority of the experiencer as informing the ethnographer's ignorance. Experience in IE is seen as both 'dialogue' and 'data' (Ibid p. 123); data is always produced collaboratively. This understanding of the research process has shaped the (re) construction of my identities as I engaged with my informants.

Apart from the fact that FUA meets the methodological criteria for the study, I should note that the major study site for this study is the university where I undertook my undergraduate studies. I have a network of colleagues, friends and academic mentors who were working at the university at the time so I entered the field with a degree of social and cultural capital. On a broad level, there are issues concerning the conceptual definition of insiderness and its relationship to outsiderness (Giwa, 2015). Connected to this issue are the Mertonian questions on whether insider perspectives offer an exclusive insight inaccessible to an external observer, and conversely, whether such insider viewpoints compromise the comprehensive and impartial comprehension that an outsider could offer to the investigation(Merton, 1972). At some points, I was an insider while I was an outsider in other instances. As a result, I became aware of how the 'situation of things' was circumscribing the fluidity of my positionalities. Indeed, scholars have argued that this debate is inadequate (Giwa, 2015, Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman, 2017) in explaining the complexities of the insider and outsider dichotomy, by noting that "we are all multiple insiders and outsiders" (Deutsch 1981 p. 174).

For instance, it has been argued that only by moving beyond a dichotomous cause and effect framework that focuses on which position is more important, can researchers begin to explore the more critical issue of how the positional status of the researcher may influence the phenomenon being studied (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman, 2017, Oriola and Haggerty, 2012). To describe how I managed these conflicting identities, in the process of uncovering

the social organisation of disability inclusion at FUA, KSU and APU, I draw on the framework of credibility and approachability developed by Mayorga-Gallo and Horge-Freeman (2017). I describe how my relationship with the study sites and interlocutors developed based on the ways in which I was perceived and my purpose on campus. I chose this framework as it offers an intersectional perspective on how to "translate the theoretical critiques of dichotomous thinking (for example, insider-outsider) into methodological practice" (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman, 2017 p. 378).

Credibility and approachability are not just performed by researchers but are also perceived by respondents and placed on researchers' bodies. By conceptualising credibility and approachability, as both performed behaviours and perceived characteristics, we are able to incorporate the researcher's positionality, the standpoint of the researched, and the power-laden particularities of the interaction in our data analyses and fieldwork reflections for the benefit of both researchers and readers (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman, 2017).

### *Credibility*

Credibility – referred to as trustworthiness– implies how I presented myself and was perceived as a researcher or scholar. This occurred through both institutional and informal mechanisms, which means that credibility could be both cultural and professional(Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman, 2017). It is also very difficult to distinguish between the two forms of credibility, as I could not say which credibility was giving me the access I had at a particular point in time; furthermore, it could be performed and perceived.

In charting my professional credibility, I had many probing questions from students with disabilities. There is a constant question of why are you researching about us. What do you know about students with disabilities? When are you going back to the UK? In most cases, I have had to showcase or share my experience of teaching, supporting and living with SWDs for the last 10 years. I shared with them how inroads into disability inclusion research were born out of the curiosity to solve the problem I faced as a teacher in an 'integrated' school. Also, because of the almost apparent "outsiderness" of a non-disabled person researching the disabled community, I mostly see myself as part of the normative ableist structure disabling the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities. I decided to take this standpoint by interrogating my privileges as the traditional and 'normal' body in higher education. In my

early days on campus, I would normally introduce myself as a PhD researcher from the University of East Anglia, but I later became a PhD researcher working with the DSC. The combination of my outsiderness and ascribed insiderness consolidated my performed or perceived professional and cultural credibility, thereby giving me the access that I needed to work on my research, especially when meeting principal officers of the university.

However, cultural credibility amongst the students was earned when I had an opportunity to volunteer as a support staff; this is similar to the 'reciprocity value' of the Omoluabi ethical codes of research developed by Oyinloye (2021). It was not something that I had planned for my fieldwork, but when I got to the university, I realised that the centre did not have a resource person for students with visual impairment. A resource person is defined by the centre as a support staff who prepares materials in accessible formats for students with visual impairment. This lack of personnel is a well-documented issue in policy implementation of disability inclusion in Nigeria ( see, Eleweke, 1997, Soje and Eleweke, 2016, Eleweke and Rodda, 2002). It emphasises the disjuncture between what university policy is saying and the actualities of student experience. I decided I could not to be simply 'a fly on the wall' and instead began to see myself as part of the DSC due to the support and cooperation I had been given since the beginning of the study. I wanted to be a temporary solution to that problem for three reasons: firstly, not having a resource person for students with visual impairment on campus, as the president described to me is "like going to a farm without tools" for them. I thought it would be useful to support these students' experiences and understand what impact (if any) my stepping in would have on their participation.

Secondly, as co-producers of the knowledge about disability inclusion, it was an avenue for me to give back to them as I began to frame my research more as a collaborative and participatory endeavour. The third thing is that I wanted to experience what it means to be a 'support staff', translating or implementing the policy of disability inclusion. More than putting myself in the shoes of the people, I was studying their work. But beyond these reasons, my decision to volunteer was methodologically significant, enabling me to build my cultural and professional credibility. Apart from being a researcher, I was regarded as a support staff from the DSC, because that is where I stayed throughout my time at FUA. It was then easy for me to introduce myself as a researcher working with the DSC.

Constructing credibility is not just about highlighting certain traits, but also about downplaying other researcher characteristics (Oriola and Haggerty, 2012). I struggled with how to introduce myself informally to people on campus. To the students, I was a PhD student; to the staff and principal officers, I was a PhD researcher; this distinction became instrumental when I realised how academic staff react to 'students' looking to meet them. It was also imperative as I was living on campus. I maintained that I am a PhD student because the university has a dedicated hostel for international students, which was where I stayed while on campus. It was, therefore, proper for me to say that I was an "international student", as there were other international PhD students living in the accommodation.

### *Approachability*

Approachability is defined as the ability to be viewed as non-threatening and safe (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman, 2017) and is necessary for initial and continued access in the field. Participating in research is a vulnerable experience and approachability captures the emotional safety individuals must feel to engage in the process. Two elements of performed approachability were evident in my research: *acceptable incompetent* and *critical accommodation*. Being the acceptable incompetent is commonly employed by researchers in the field (Lofland et al., 2006). This is the case where the researcher is seen as affirming of respondents' experience and willing to learn from them, as in Smith's (2005) call for institutional ethnographers to acknowledge the participants as expert knowers.

The concept of critical accommodation involves adopting a strategy of silence or conformity to navigate social dynamics, particularly when generating data. This often entails conforming to certain emotional expressions while refraining from others. An instance of this was me embracing the role of the acceptable incompetent in terms of being a novice in American Sign Language: engaging with the hearing-impaired cluster presented an initial challenge; I had to relearn signs, greetings, and master new local signs, predominantly communicating with the HI clusters via WhatsApp and note writing. My genuine interest and rapid learning of signs facilitated my integration into the Deaf community. Despite my limited proficiency, my attempts were appreciated by the hearing-impaired students, making me approachable and fostering connections within the Deaf community on campus.

However, this cultural credibility and approachability came with challenges. I experienced a level of resentment and perceived strangeness from the community at some points. Additionally, I observed a shift in how I was perceived as no longer fully Nigerian, possibly influenced by my accent, which was no longer typical. Some even mistook me for being from Ghana or a francophone country, expressing surprise when I identified as Nigerian of Yoruba extraction. Instead of being seen as just another citizen, I often found myself treated as a visitor in need of protection and guidance — an experience appreciated yet unsettling (Oriola and Haggerty, 2012).

The prevailing assumption is that researchers will eventually find their way or organically develop the pivotal relationships they need to conduct their work. I agree that bodies and emotions matter in the field, and we must bring our whole self to research (Hordge-Freeman, 2018). In all, "bringing your wholeself to research" is as much about being reflexive about our bodies and emotions in the field, as it is about embracing the power of our multidimensional identities. This is an especially important reminder for those of us with marginalised identities who are discouraged from drawing on personal experiences and encouraged instead to ignore our emotional connections to the communities with which we study for the sake of "objective" science (Hordge-Freeman, 2018, Oriola and Haggerty, 2012, Oyinloye, 2021).

### 3.4.2. Epistemic Reflexivity

The reflections I have produced above represented reflexivity as critical and progressive, where I have conspicuously displayed self-awareness and biographical reflection. I have presented the "webs of significance" that separate and integrate me into the social conditions of my participants. I have engaged essentially in "textual reflexiveness" where texts do not "simply and transparently report" an independent order of reality but are themselves implicated in the work of "reality-construction"(Atkinson, 2014 p. 7). But what is missing is how the structuring effects of social fields have impacted the belief, dispositions and practices of my analysis of the social practices (Maton, 2003). This missing piece predisposed Bourdieu's departure from textual or biographical reflexivity, to what he calls epistemic reflexivity. Epistemic reflexivity, as discussed by Bourdieu, is defined as the inclusion of a theory of intellectual practice as an integral component and necessary condition of the critical theory of society (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Simply put, critical reflexivity will not only "turn back" to unveil the

individual blind spots of the researcher but also unearth the epistemological unconsciousness of the discipline.

According to Maton (2003), Bourdieu's theory begs the (reflexive) question of the extent to which his analyses of the partial and positioned nature of knowledge, produced by actors within intellectual fields, are more than merely the reflection of his own partial and positioned viewpoint. As further argued by Maton, engaging in epistemic reflexivity requires that we ask, "how can one overcome the gravitational effects of the intellectual field?" (ibid, p.57) Depending on the social positioning of the researcher, these reflections could be sociological, individualistic and even narcissistic in some sense, to capture what Maton described as "enacted reflexivity", which typically addresses the *social relation of knowledge* rather than its epistemic relation (Maton, 2000). Doing a reflexive sociology requires scrutinising the collective scientific unconscious that is embedded in theories, problems and national categories and scholarship. What Bourdieu is saying is that researchers must be aware of how the organisational and cognitive structure of the field is discursively organising their position in the field, in relation to the objects. Therefore, I have chosen to do an epistemic reflexivity that not only goes beyond my social positioning, but also recognises the impact of the field on my positioning, and how I carry out my craft as a sociologist. I now turn to how I pursued an epistemic reflexivity in IE.

### 3.4.3. Doing Sociology with People: A Manifesto

I described in 3.2 the theoretical evolution of IE from a sociology rooted in the standpoint of women as a *sociology for women,* to a *sociology for people.* Taking women's standpoint is not just about women (which is a heterogenous group on its own), but about shared exclusion and ruling. Like the few other scholars using IE, I also recognise the lack of IE interest in advocating for a sociology *with* people (Murray, 2019, Walby, 2007). Smith acknowledged people as expert knowers of the everyday actualities, but there is the implicit suggestion that they might not know how their lives are organised. Murray argues that the sociological inquirer becomes privileged in knowing beyond the local, and thus will do IE research *for* people, but not *with* them. It follows that the participant's experience is written within the authoritative bird's eye view of the researcher, without the involvement of people who co-produced the

research ( cf. Freire, 2000, Touraine, 1981).

In her argument for 'decolonised methodologies', Linda Tuhiwai Smith, ─ a Maori Scholar of Indigenous education ─ described this impasse as an "abusive social relation of research" between the researcher and the researched; she goes on to say that this is what indigenous people and other groups in the postcolonial society, have been subjected to for a long time (Smith, 2013). To Fricker (2007), it is "an injustice that is distinctively epistemic in kind", theorising it as consisting, most fundamentally, in a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower " (ibid p.1). In my case, this becomes possible because as a researcher, I get to use my 'agential power' afforded by the geo-political locations of the institution(s) I represent. Without the decolonisation and de-commodification of the 'university', the possibility of a deep cognitive justice remains elusive (Santos, 2018).

In trying to understand how everyone fits together in the enactment of policies, sociology of absences in the university for me and SWDs in this study means unveiling the disabling structures and conditions that perpetuate unequal educational experiences of certain bodies deemed as non-traditional and non-existent. According to Boaventura De Sousa Santos (2001), the sociology of absences is the "procedure through which what does not exist, or whose existence is socially ungraspable or inexpressible, is conceived of as the active result of a given social process" (p. 191). It helps to invent or unveil whatever social and political conditions, experiments, initiatives, and conceptions have been successfully suppressed by hegemonic forms of globalisation; or, rather than suppressed, have not been allowed to exist, to become pronounceable as a need or an aspiration.

I agree that IE has been able to address to some extent what Fricker described as "testimonial injustice" which "occurs when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word" (2007, p.1) by starting from the everyday actualities of people. However, at the same time, it is embroiled in the "hermeneutical injustice", which is a gap in collective interpretive resources that puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences (Fricker, 2007 p. 1). This is also the concern of Walby (2007) when they argue that data analysis techniques in IE remains underdeveloped and risks the possibility of an IE research to produce and misrepresent, rather than preserve, the subject.

This misrepresentation, they argue, could be a teleological conduit for "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 167), a soft form of violence whereby cultural forms or theoretical frameworks are pushed onto a social group (Walby, 2007). Instead of "settling cosily into claims that they have preserved the subject's presence, the institutional ethnographer has to consider the role of symbolic violence in her or his own method of inquiry and develop a disposition toward reflexive intervention in their own construction of the world" (Walby, 2007 p. 1025).

This becomes critical for me as a sociologist, working with people who have been historically researched, concealed and spoken for ( cf. Fanon, 2001, Spivak, 2003, Santos, 2016, Ake, 1982) -the Fanonian *Wretched of the Earth*. The paradigmatic question for me is: how do I slough this toga of symbolic and epistemic violence, as I go back to Nigeria to ask people how they do inclusive education policies - largely critiqued as a "colonial project" (Walton, 2018, Ndlovu, 2019)- and make sense of their experience during my analysis. This is the premise of my engagement with IE grounded in decolonial theories. I wanted to do a sociology that recognises and starts from the colonial actualities of the people in the periphery, where their voices preserved in the *order of things* and the transformation of this social condition, is also on the agenda, through what Alan Touraine describes as a sociological intervention. I explore how I attempted sociological intervention in chapter 8.

### 3.5. "Ethically Important Moments"

This study adheres to context-sensitive ethical guidelines, drawing from sources such as the University of East Anglia (UEA) and the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2018). Ensuring informed consent was a primary concern, emphasising participants' awareness of the research's purpose, their voluntary participation, and the implications of involvement. The commitment to obtaining consent was continuous throughout the data generation process. Information sheets and consent forms were adapted with the assistance of disability experts and support staff to tailor the consent process. Multimedia aids and platforms were employed, such as WhatsApp broadcasts, to brief participants about the study and address their questions. For students with specific needs, customised forms were provided, ensuring

accessibility and understanding.

Participants, particularly students, were given the autonomy to consent to specific aspects of the study. Challenges arose when some students hesitated to sign consent forms, expressing fears of potential consequences. Fresh students, uncertain about their stay on campus, were particularly cautious. In some cases, consent for observational spaces, like classrooms, was obtained through lecturers, maintaining the confidentiality of students with disabilities. Obtaining consent in interview locations posed challenges with regard to maintaining confidentiality. Efforts to secure private meeting spaces evolved over the course of the study. I initially opted for popular and convenient locations but later secured a room in the building hosting the disability support services unit. Despite these efforts, maintaining complete confidentiality proved challenging: for example, students with visual impairment brought volunteers, often classmates or roommates, to interviews. Balancing confidentiality with participants' comfort, particularly regarding female participants with visual impairment and their female volunteers, became an ethical consideration. While male volunteers could be asked to wait outside, a similar request for female volunteers posed challenges. Sensitivity to participants' concerns led to a compromise between confidentiality and the comfort of female participants, reflecting an ethically important moment (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004).

Written consents were obtained from lecturers observed and interviewed at FUA and KSU. Publicising my research presence on campus involved introducing myself at events and engaging with academics mentioned in previous interviews, maintaining relations between entry-level participants and second-level actors. Support staff consent was secured by obtaining written consent from the directors of the centres and heads of departments, followed by approaching individual staff members with information sheets and consent forms. Students' participation was acknowledged with food vouchers redeemable on campus, arranged with a local fast-food vendor. To further incentivise and adapt to student needs, the food voucher arrangement was later replaced with data bundles, addressing challenges related to internet data subscriptions, particularly for those attending interviews via MS Teams. Negotiating access was an ongoing process, requiring credibility and legitimacy verification at each stage of the fieldwork. Approval documentation from my university, the vice-chancellor, the university ethics committee, and department heads or directors, was often included in

communication with various units. This documentation was considered as "activated" texts, enabling access to data or documents, and aligning with the coordination of institutional courses of action (Smith, 2005). Despite using pseudonyms and de-identifying participant information, ensuring full institutional anonymity was challenging in today's easily searchable higher education context. To prioritise participant protection, a composite account approach was adopted (Corman, 2021), reconstructing identities using traits and attributes to explain the phenomena. Data collected during and after the fieldwork were stored securely in a password-protected platform provided by the University of East Anglia and will be destroyed after 10 years.

As highlighted in this chapter, being an insider researcher has both advantages and challenges, particularly in managing relational ethics and power dynamics. The complexities of interviewing higher-ranking, older, and more experienced informants, who are also friends and/or mentors, present the anthropological clichéd problem of "making the familiar strange and the strange familiar" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992 p. 6). Adopting situational ethical discretion, guided by ongoing reviews and reflective memos, helped navigate these dynamics. Regular audit meetings with supervisors provided additional oversight and guidance, ensuring ethical responsibility throughout the research process. Returning home to work in a cross-cultural context added another layer of complexity, necessitating sensitivity to diverse onto-epistemological positions and beliefs. I had planned to suspend interviews and signpost interviewees to counselling services if there were any instances of discomfort or secondary trauma while recalling or retelling their experience as SWDs on campus. I also informed them that they were free not to answer any questions if they did not want to. In fact, none of my participants displayed any obvious signs of discomfort but instead told me that they had outgrown that "stage of denial" and I did not need to be "sorry" about those things that had happened to them.

Before entering the field, I considered shadowing as a method of data generation because it is less intrusive and permits one to preserve an attitude of outsideness, as against participant observation, which implies acting with and observing the participants simultaneously. However, this distinction became problematic, as I was just an observer. Yet, observation also

creates psychic discomfort for the person doing the observation and the person being observed. For students with disabilities, this created an additional layer of psychological stress of me "being" around, as they were always forced to introduce me to people we met or who were around them. My relationship with these students was resolved in several ways, such as blending-in in dress and action; telling them about my experience while I was a student on campus; accepting their invitations to events they organised; and being consistently honest about the purpose of the research. I kept the shadowing period short at first, to prevent it from becoming overwhelming, mitigating power imbalances through the co-creation of research data and delivering on the ethical commitments of confidentiality and anonymity. As a researcher, the most important value for me is never to behave like a fly on the wall but rather to behave like a responsible adult, always showing respect and empathy towards my participants (Oyinloye, 2021). For students whom I could not shadow, I requested that they keep a diary or journal of their daily activities as a means of self-observation, allowing them to 'gatekeep' which part of their daily activities were then observed or reported (Alaszewski, 2006). The shadowing or diary collection was done though an online form where students responded to a set of questions about their day. This method complements other data generation methods I used in this study (See appendix D for diary sample).

### 3.6. Data Analysis Approach

While the spongey immersion of an ethnographer might make everything seen, felt, heard, touched, tasted or smelled at the study site be regarded as data (Spradley, 2016), I delineated the kinds of data I would need in order to answer the questions set out at the beginning of this study. At the same time, I was open about the evolving nature of my research, which has an element of following a thread of social relations, which makes the fieldwork data-led rather than theory-led. This data-led approach to data generation also informed the iterative nature of the analysis that started right from the field. After every interview or observation session, I would return to my room in the hostel to listen to the audio recording and write a report of things discussed in the interview. This would then inform the next person or office I needed to go to and the questions I would ask as regards the working relations of disability inclusion policy on campus.

My interviews were sequentially connected in such a way that the preliminary analysis of the interviews I had with students became the foundation from which I engaged with support staff and academic managers. Observation activities written in my field notes were analysed alongside the texts and interview transcripts. Searching for the analytical tools that would accurately represent what was said and observed in the field, remains a challenge in most qualitative studies. Most studies have used analytical methods guided or prescribed by the theoretical underpinning of their research. This prescription, or over-abstraction of the lived experience of people, is what Smith and other IE researchers have critiqued as the problem of the traditional approach to sociological research. They argue that this approach fails to create a space in which voices being marginalised within the system can be heard; on the contrary, they become further silenced in the data analysis and reporting. Even though IE uses some of the conventional data generation tools I have explained in this chapter, there have been disparate applications and many IE researchers have analysed their data based on Smith's comment that "practitioners engaged in different areas are confronted with different research exigencies" (Smith, 2006, p. 2). This certainly allowed me to focus on the mapping of the social organisation of relations that are mediated by texts and discourse.

The documentary analysis method used in this study, draws on the work of Stanley (2018) and (Murray, 2020) which sees texts as "active and occurring", needing to be read and traced in an act-text-act sequence. This is because texts such as policy texts are created, distributed and received, in different contexts (Stanley, 2018). To follow these IE scholars, I have used a broad framework which comprises context, pretext, text and post-text and emerging context, to analyse some of the key policy texts collected and followed during the study. By using this analytical frame, the content of the texts is looked at in detail, examining the conditions in which the texts originate, the meanings, secondary adjustment or reinterpretation, and organising effects (Stanley, 2018). This chimes with Codd's (1988) argument that in policy analysis, "there is no single reading of policy texts, and that for any text a plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings" (p. 239). Codd goes on to suggests that:

> "rather than searching for authorial intentions or the authoritative allocated values, perhaps the proper task of policy analysis is to examine the differing effects that documents have in the production of meaning by readers" (ibid, p. 239).

This means that the slippage between policy intentions and outcomes is not simply a matter of a 'gap' between policy formulation (rhetoric) and implementation (reality). We must also take into consideration the notion of competing discourses in policy analysis (Taylor, 1997).

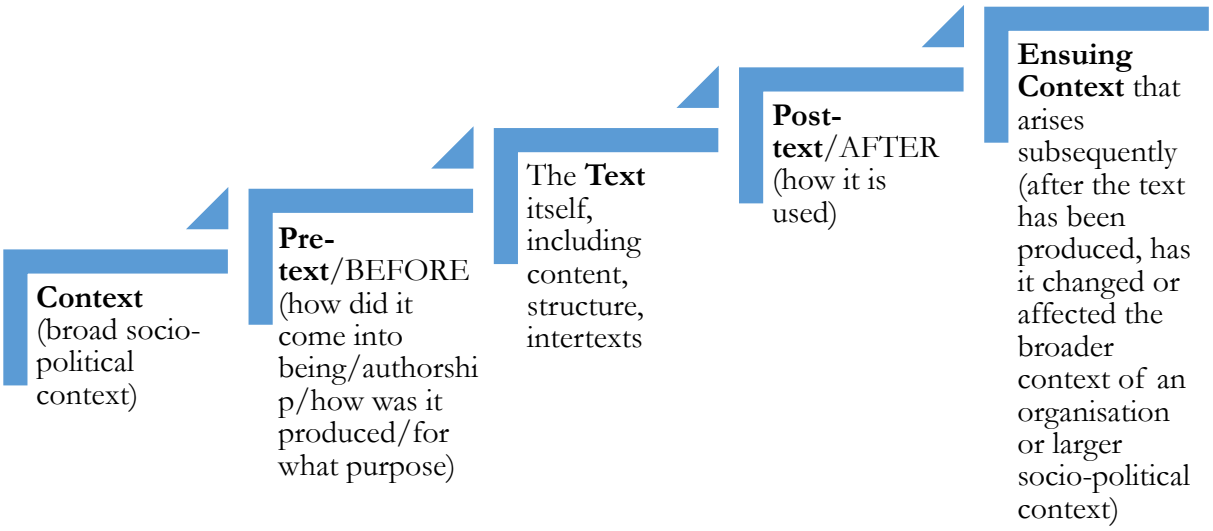



*Figure 1 : Textual Analysis Reading Frame (Adapted from Stanley (2018) and Murray (2020)*

### 3.6.1. Listening Guide

The question asked at the beginning of this chapter regarding what can be known about the social, is a corollary to the question asked by Doucet and Mauthner (2008): what *really* can be known about other people, without resorting to naive realist or hopeless postmodern conceptualisations in qualitative analysis? Doucet and Mauthner (2008) contend that a subject cannot be truly known, but we can know "what is narrated by subjects, as well as our interpretations of their stories within the wider web of social and structural relations from which narrated subjects speak" (p. 404). They suggest that one way to understand these narratives, while privileging the voice(s) of the subject, is through the use of the Listening Guide (LG).

LG provides an alternative to traditional coding data analysis methods, as it is a relational voice-centred method which allows qualitative researchers to listen and hear previously unnoticed and underappreciated voices (Petrovic et al, 2015). LG, as developed by the American psychologist Carol Gilligan and colleagues, was used to address the concern that women's voices, in particular, have not been noticeable or adequately represented in research (Gilligan, 2015). It departs from the conventional method of analysis by delaying or eliminating the reduction of complex data by fitting people into researcher-defined theoretical paradigms (Mauthner, 1999) or predetermined categories of data quantification (Sorsoli and Tolman, 2008). Scholars have used LG mostly in research studies that seek to amplify voices of people who are otherwise suppressed in society. It has also been a useful heuristic device to address reflexivity and the role of the researcher in data analysis (Doucet (2018b), Doucet and Mauthner (2008), and Gilligan (2015, 2017).

This study uses LG as a novel approach to the analysis of policy research and the institutional ethnography of disability inclusion. Walby (2013) argues that since the emphasis of IE is on how work in organisations coordinates everyday experience, data analysis in IE cannot focus on individual standpoints alone or, worse, neglect them. A good IE analysis, they suggest, will find a way to locate the individuals and their experience within a complex institutional field (Walby, 2013, McCoy, 2000). Comparing Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA) with LG, Walby (2013) contends that "the psychological mode of framing the world in IPA focuses on identity, consciousness and experience but it does not extend to the organisational level." (p.142). As such, IPA tends to limit analysis to the 'identity' of individuals rather than treating the narrated stories of the individuals as a reflection of socially organised knowledge. Because LG sees the individual as socially shaped, it becomes commensurable and consistent with the focal points of IE (Walby, 2013) by enabling understanding of how the narrated self is situated or their relations organised within organisational contexts.

There have been a range of different and modified uses of LG. Researchers have used it for analysing interview and focus group transcripts with women with post-partum depression (Mauthner, 1999); combatant women at the war front (Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Tekoah, 2021); workplace transitions (Balan, 2005); family life (Hutton and Lystor, 2020); single fathers who "mother" (Doucet, 2018a). Others have used it to analyse the email self-narratives of young, gifted students (Dillon, 2011); reflective essays of dietetics students in the university

(Petrovic et al., 2015); and the silenced voice in literacy (Woodcock, 2016). It could be used when a text or transcript contains a first-person voice or where a first-person voice might be expected (Gilligan, 2015).

I have used the computer-assisted qualitative software programme NVivo to do the four reading and listening steps advocated in LG as shown in figure 2 below:

- Listening for the plot,
- Constructing the I poems
- Listening for contrapuntal voices and
- Composing and analysing

(Gilligan 2012, 2015, Petrovic et al., 2015)

Nodes

| Name | Files | References | Created On | Created By |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening for Plots | 0 | 0 | 26/06/2022 23:50 | AB |
| Home to School | 10 | 47 | 14/07/2022 15:33 | AB |
| Entrance Exam | 5 | 13 | 14/07/2022 15:42 | AB |
| Moving around | 3 | 4 | 24/11/2022 14:19 | AB |
| the old way | 3 | 6 | 14/07/2022 15:43 | AB |
| Family Support | 4 | 8 | 14/07/2022 15:49 | AB |
| Moving on | 2 | 3 | 14/07/2022 15:55 | AB |
| Lack of Information | 5 | 6 | 14/07/2022 15:33 | AB |
| Preparatory Skills | 4 | 7 | 14/07/2022 15:38 | AB |
| Rehabilitation | 4 | 5 | 14/07/2022 15:34 | AB |
| School Choice | 3 | 4 | 24/11/2022 14:24 | AB |
| Waiting | 1 | 1 | 14/07/2022 15:37 | AB |
| Getting to class | 6 | 25 | 14/07/2022 15:57 | AB |
| Front Seats | 4 | 5 | 14/07/2022 16:00 | AB |
| The Rush | 6 | 12 | 14/07/2022 15:59 | AB |
| Accommodation | 5 | 49 | 14/07/2022 16:03 | AB |
| Assessment Cultures | 4 | 7 | 24/10/2022 17:08 | AB |
| DIY | 2 | 7 | 14/07/2022 16:29 | AB |
| Pastoral Relations | 5 | 11 | 14/07/2022 16:34 | AB |
| Unwritten | 3 | 7 | 14/07/2022 16:46 | AB |
| Environment | 3 | 9 | 14/07/2022 16:09 | AB |
| After Class | 4 | 6 | 14/07/2022 16:12 | AB |

Nodes

| Name | Files | References | Created On | Created By |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Where students go on | 4 | 6 | 21/10/2022 17:06 | AB |
| Supportive Service | 7 | 9 | 14/07/2022 16:52 | AB |
| Survival Skills | 6 | 19 | 14/07/2022 16:15 | AB |
| Digital Work | 3 | 9 | 02/11/2022 20:08 | AB |
| House Work | 2 | 6 | 14/07/2022 16:15 | AB |
| The Change Work | 5 | 10 | 14/07/2022 16:59 | AB |
| The burden of respons | 2 | 2 | 21/10/2022 17:10 | AB |
| The Process | 1 | 2 | 21/10/2022 17:09 | AB |
| Material Contexts | 1 | 2 | 30/05/2023 18:37 | AB |
| The I Poems | 0 | 0 | 27/06/2022 00:09 | AB |
| First Person Plural We=us | 3 | 32 | 14/07/2022 14:35 | AB |
| First Person Singular I=me | 4 | 262 | 14/07/2022 14:33 | AB |
| Second Person Singular Yo | 3 | 28 | 14/07/2022 14:33 | AB |
| Third Person Plural They=t | 3 | 76 | 14/07/2022 14:37 | AB |
| Contrapuntal Voices | 0 | 0 | 27/06/2022 00:21 | AB |
| Discontinued Accommoda | 0 | 0 | 24/10/2022 17:49 | AB |
| Embedding Practices | 0 | 0 | 24/10/2022 17:46 | AB |
| Volunteering Relations | 0 | 0 | 24/10/2022 17:44 | AB |
| Methods | 1 | 1 | 20/10/2022 14:06 | AB |
| Being Researched | 3 | 7 | 20/10/2022 14:06 | AB |

*Figure 2: A Screenshot of the Coding Frame in NVivo Showing the 4 levels of Listening Guide.*

### *Listening for the Plot*

The first reading is to listen for the plot, including protagonists being described by participants. It helps the researcher to address the question of who is there? Who and what is missing, are there repeated words, emotional hot-spots, gaps and striking metaphors (Gilligan, 2015). This reading also involves noting the researcher's reactions to the plot, or what Walby (2013) refers to as 'reflexive presencing of the researcher.' As noted by Gilligan (2015), it is one of the ways LG prompts the researcher to listen to his or her own voice, distinguish it from that of the participants, to prevent "ventriloquising through others or voicing over their voices" (ibid, p.71) when writing up. While analysing Sophia's transcript, the first reading oriented me in knowing the who, what, where, when, and why of what is happening. Then, how do I see myself in the text, my background, history and experiences in relation to the person interviewed. I then used topic coding (Petrovic et al., 2015), a descriptive coding technique

which allows me to create emphasis on the experience or ideas being communicated by the participants by coding a chunk of texts of any size under an issue or theme of relevance. Codes such as "getting to class", "front seats", "the rush" were given to specific portions of narratives but were later examined holistically within the contexts of the study and how they have been communicated by the participants to develop an overarching theme like *Mobility Work*. Codes such as "entrance exam", "the old way" "family support", "identifying" "moving on" "information deficit" "preparatory skills" and "the waiting" were pulled out to write the *Liminal Access Work*. I then went further to "attend to (my) own responses to the narratives by explicitly bringing (my) own subjectivities into the process of interpretation" by writing a reflexive note on the transcript and the relationships I have with some of the issues and plots in the narratives (Gilligan et al., 2003 p. 160). These excerpts were written as analytical memo attached to each case in Nvivo and used to inform the analysis.

### *I Poems*

In the second step, the same transcript was read in Nvivo to listen for 'voice of the I, or 'I poems' phrased in personal pronoun or how the participant narrates a sense of self. This captures and underlines each first-person singular "I" pronoun utilised by the participant accompanied by subsequent words (Petrovic et al, 2015, Doucet, 2018a and Gilligan, 2017). This is done to become better acquainted with how participant speaks of and describes himself or herself and their shift in perception and self-disclosure. In addition to the "I" extended as I=me=my=myself, I followed Balan (2005) and Petrovic et al. (2015) to include the pronouns "You" "We" and "They" to enrich the depth of the study by understanding who is doing what and how participants describe their relations and roles with other actors in the enactment of disability inclusion policy. In that case, the "you" was extended to include possessive pronouns like "your", yourself/yourselves, while the plural personal pronoun "we" was extended to include words like "us," "our" and "ourselves". To also understand how the students and staff whose standpoints have taken portray or distance themselves from institution, I added the personal pronoun "they," extended to include the word "their", "them", "themselves" (Petrovic et al., 2015). Each I statement are then coded in Nvivo to provide a degree of context on its own into four inclusive nodes based on the I, you, we, and they categories (See table 6 below). A case query in Nvivo was then used to extract the I poems belonging to Sophia in the data schema.

| *Pronouns* | *Extensions* |
|---|---|
| *"I"* | "Me", "my", "myself" |
| *"You"* | "your", yourself/yourselves |
| *"we"* | "us," "our" and "ourselves" |
| *"they,"* | "their", "them", "themselves" |

*Table 6: I poems extensions*

Sophia's poems with "I"

*My name is Sophia Paul*
*I am from Plateau State*
*I was born in Plateau, and grew up in Lagos*
*I was born sighted,*
*I could see without a disability*
*I lost my sight when I was in school*
*I was doing my diploma*

*I love music,*
*I love travelling, storytelling,*
*I love cooking.*

*My hostel has a reservoir, a well and a tap.*
*I draw water from the reservoir*
*I draw water from the well*

*I use the fetcher to draw water*
*And I carry it upstairs because I stay up*
*The first floor of a storey building.*

Sophia's poems with "they" (Third Person Plural)

*I felt they should have just trained people*
*they had to*
*they had to read aloud the passage twice*
*they were reading aloud*
*they had professors from English*
*every subject you are doing they had to read aloud*

*they copied our work from our systems to their systems*
*they started marking manually*
*if others without disabilities can write their JAMB in one day*

*I get they're trying to do something for us*
*they're not doing it the right way*

### *Listening for the Contrapuntal Voice*

The third reading calls for the researcher to listen for the loudest voice and other 'polyphonic voices' within stories that are reflective of the broader relations the self is enmeshed in by reading for relationships and relational subjectivities by focusing on the respondents intimate relational worlds, organisation supports, and social networks. By presenting the multiple and contradictory voices of SWDs in Nigerian HE , it becomes increasingly difficult to objectify them or apply one-dimensional stereotypes.

### *Theoretical Reading and Writing*

In the fourth step, I read the transcript for traces of how participants' capacity for action is shaped and limited by cultural discourses and structural and textual forces (Gilligan and Eddy, 2017). The last two readings as described by Doucet (2018a) are the theoretical readings which listen for the intersections of the narration of self, links up with broader discourses of class, gender, ethnicity, age, ability and coloniality. These discourses are underpinned by fundamental principles of post/decolonial theories (Santos, 2018, Mignolo, 2002, Mignolo, 2007, Mignolo and Walsh, 2018, Mbembe, 2001, Grosfoguel, 2011), and relations of ruling (Smith, 2005) which connects the local with the translocal, structural, ideological and material levels. To Sophia, her social relations and gender was evident in her assimilation as fresh student on campus, and experience of alternating "two worlds" having been to a university before becoming visually impaired helped her to set up the network she needs to survive as a SWDs. Even though she has working-class parents, she carries herself as someone with a middle-class taste which has effect on how people treat and relate with her. Her knowledge of the policy environment around disability advocacy became handy in the way she negotiates access and participation at FUA.

Because the listening guide calls for at least four readings of the interview scripts, each time reading it differently(Doucet, 2018b), I have only used LG for the in-depth interview transcripts of SWDs (n=10) and support (n=4) and academic staff (n=3) making a total of 17 transcripts with an average of 7 pages per transcript. I did not necessarily spend the same

amount of time on each and every one of the transcripts (Doucet, 2015). Reading these transcripts with LG grounded me in the central plots and gaps of the data, I then look for similar and dominant themes in the rest of the interview transcripts. This is obviously one of the downsides of LG, as it requires a considerable amount of time to carry out four to five separate readings of interview transcript within this project that has large and multiple data set (Doucet, 2018a).

NVivo was then used to code the themes and reflexive memos developed from the Listening Guide readings' steps. This coding was then integrated in the mapping, indexing, and writing accounts of this study's findings. Mapping supports the visualisation of disjunctures between what people espouse as ideological realities and the actual experiential realities (Ng et al., 2013). I used indexing to organise data into connected practices and happenings (Rankin, 2017) to advance the analytic view of how the universities' institutional cultures and policy practices are organised. Writing an account entails selecting an 'instance' of activity or case or a set of 'social objects' from the ethnographic data and explicating relations at both micro and macro-level analyses of triangulated data from observation records, interviews, and documents. These are thematically brought together as chapters to illustrate specific institutional processes answering the research questions raised.

### 3.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted the theoretical framework and methods used in gathering, analysis and reporting the study. I attempted to pursue a study that would start from the actualities of people while keeping institutional gaze on how things work and organised. The theoretical lenses through which I have entered the social demanded that I see people, texts and processes as pivotal in understanding how policies are enacted. These micropolitical realities also impact on how institutional ethnographies are done, with the notion that it is important to decide whether we stand by the side of the super-ordinates or the sub-ordinates (Becker, 1967) and how I took stock of my relations with the gravitational forces of the field.

The quest to do research that is reflexive, relational and transformative is the push that set me into exploring IE and Decolonial Theories, while one starts from people's everyday realities, the other seeks to transform the colonial conditions perpetuating these realities. In what I have called a Decolonial Institutional Ethnography in this chapter, the rest of the thesis elaborates

how this framework has been used in understanding the organisation of the ruling relations of disability inclusion in a postcolonial context. This study therefore contributes to our empirical and theoretical knowledge of how decolonial/postcolonial theories (reconstitution) and institutional ethnography (ruling relations) could engender the institutional understanding of SWDs' lived experience.

# Chapter 4. Texts

*"A decision made in the present about the future is overridden by the momentum of the past. The past becomes like that well-trodden path: what usually happens still happens, despite a change of policy, even through a change of policy. An old policy is another well-trodden path."*

(Sara Ahmed, 2019 p.152)

## 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I attempt to answer the first research question: the representation of the meanings of inclusion, inclusive education and disability in key policy texts. I also illustrate how these meanings are deployed in the social practice or organisation of disability inclusion in universities in Nigeria, and their 'ideological effect' on students' everyday experience with disabilities. I examine how these concepts have been loosely produced and reproduced in key policy texts on education and the education of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. These texts include the National Policy on Education (NPE) (FGN, 1981, 2004, 2013), National Policy on Special Needs Education (2015), and the National Policy on Inclusive Education (2016).

To do this, I use the textual analysis reading frame introduced in chapter 3, which includes looking at the context, text, post-text and ensuing context of the key policy texts under review in sections 4.2 to 4.6 (see Fig 3 below). Using this reading frame, the content of the texts is looked at in detail by examining the conditions in which the texts originate, the meanings, secondary adjustment or reinterpretation, and organising effects (Stanley, 2018).

Across these sections, I show how the policy texts have interdiscursively produced the trajectories of these concepts, and how the contradictions in these texts have come to dictate the postcolonial conditions of people with disabilities in Nigeria. I argue that the path dependencies of these policies have made the inclusion mandate of the Deaf Support Centre (DSC) of the Federal University of Arewa challenging, in that it has required a change of name

and the need to address the new demands of doing disability inclusion. As Kalinnikova Magnusson and Walton (2021) argue, the difficulties in implementing more inclusive education system are exacerbated by ideological legacies of colonial regimes wherein people with disabilities were educated in a segregated setting. This exacerbation is possible because initial policy provisions have produced an enduring momentum of path dependency (Tikly, 2019); moreover, historical patterns and practice have consequences on system evolution and are self-reinforcing (Boeger and Corkin, 2017), as Ahmed's (2019 p. 167) theory that "the more a path is used, the more a path is used". In other words, while policy can be an instrument for change, it can also be a reason why things stay the same.

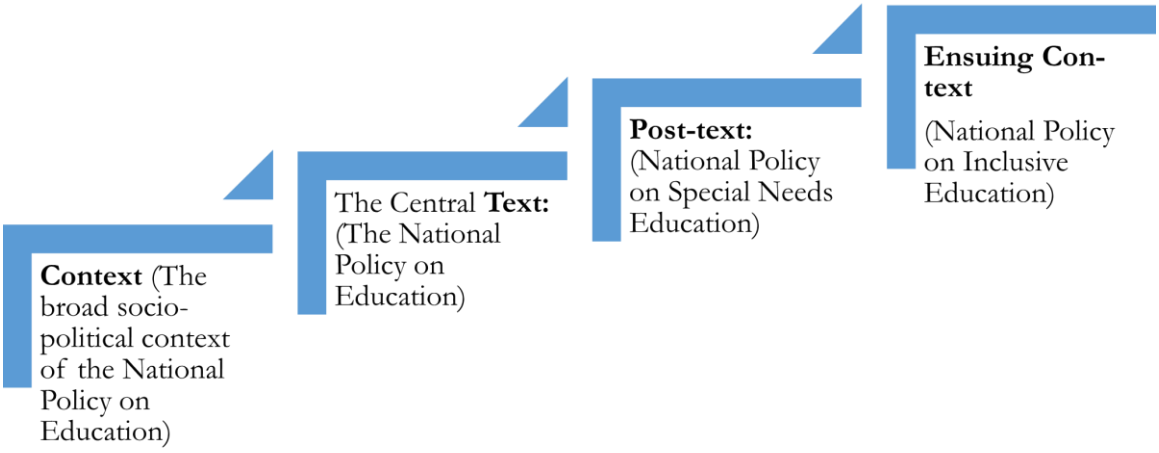



*Figure 3: Reading Frame for Textual Analysis (Adapted from Stanley 2018 and Murray, 2020)*

### 4.2. Socio-Political Contexts of the National Policy on Education

This section briefly gives an account of why Nigeria needed a "national policy" on education in its first republic. I illustrate how this exigency gave birth to the nation's struggle with what I describe as the "expert problem", as it weaned itself from colonial dependence in the 1960s. I present this as the broad sociopolitical context that led to the production and evolution of Nigeria's first National Policy on Education.

Extant literature on the evaluation of colonial influence on education development before independence in 1960, has focused mainly on Britain's unrestricted and unlimited inputs.

Omolewa (1989) and Ahmed (1989) however noted that the content and structure of education in Nigeria also witnessed substantial pressure from other Northern powers like America, Germany, and France. The foundation for educational development was ostensibly laid within this period as most available education provisions were tailored to the available jobs and positions within the colonial administration and embargoed the expansion of schools within financial limits.

> "The social functions of the university centred on the education of future eventual independence of the colonies. Colonial higher education was intended to produce "men and women with standards of public service and capacity for leadership which self-rule requires". The Asquith report recommended the establishment of university colleges... informed by the British conception of higher education, judged by British standards, British academics, and modelled after the University of London" (Ahmed, 1989 p.2).

The function of higher education as described by Ahmed, was primarily elitist, following the designs of universities in the metropole and the need for the right kind of leaders who could take on the country's post-independence agenda. These elitist kinds of leaders are what Van den Berghe described as the "indigenous mandarinate of the British image" (p.19). He further notes that universities in the colonies were relatively a low-cost colonial adaptation of an academic model that was already "obsolete" in Britain, the Edwardian stereotype which the founders remembered from their own student days. What is poignant in this elitist foundation is that the Oxbridge model transplanted to the colonies was not the more "democratic version" which was evolving during Britain's post-World-War Two of Labour government days. This foundation confounded the national cohesion problem of a pluralistic society like Nigeria artificially created by Britain. The adoption of the 1951 constitution, however, gave Nigerians the opportunity for self-government in educational matters but were then confronted with the challenge to evolve a Nigerian educational policy in the middle of the Ten-Year Educational Plans that had been earlier launched by the British in 1944 (Omolewa, 1989).

### 4.2.1. The Problem of Experts

On the eve of independence, the Federal Ministry of Education, led by Sir Eric Ashby, then Master of Clare College at Cambridge University and former Vice-Chancellor of Belfast University, was commissioned to investigate the development of a post-secondary certificate and higher education in Nigeria. Ashby's team comprised three Americans, three Nigerians, and five British experts from Oxford. With a minority representation of Nigerians, the team recommended, among other things, the continued use and inclusion of "experts" from Britain and the United States on the governing bodies of Nigerian universities (Omolewa,1989).

Challenging the Asquith tradition of "pure arts and sciences" in Nigerian post-secondary education, the commission instead proposed massive "investment in education" to drive "national economic development" (Ahmed, 1989 p. 5). Nigeria, according to Ahmed, like other postcolonial states, was a promising ground for testing the "human capital development theory" (ibid. p.5). This provided a fertile ground for international experts and specialists to perform what Omolewa referred to as a "surgical operation on the educational development" of former colonies (Omolewa 1989 p. 13).

When Mignolo (2018) outlined the levels holding the colonial matrix of power together, he referred to experts as 'the enunciators' of the rhetoric of modernity, used to convince people that certain policies are for the betterment and salvation of everyone. This enunciating role of the experts sustained what Mignolo calls the "theological principles and philosophical-scientific truths of the coloniality of power" (p.143). In a Habermasian context, the term "expert cultures" assumes the colonisation of the lifeworld (Habermas, 1984 p. 397). The key idea is that the pronouncements or depictions of reality by these 'experts' have generated discursive structures, akin to 'ideologies.' These structures, while inadvertently embraced by ordinary individuals and politicians as truth, are, in reality, manifestations of patriarchy, racism, and similar biases (Turner, 2001).

While Nigerian leaders acknowledged that the comprehensive systems of Britain and the US were desirable templates for the inchoate development of Nigerian education policy, education historians argue that some major reforms undertaken after independence were designed to 'Nigerianise' the education system (Fafunwa, 1971, Omolewa, 1989, Tamuno and Atanda, 1989). The post-independence education system in Nigeria was later characterised by (1) a

failed attempt to Nigerianise the education system, resulting in a bastardised English system (Omolewa, 1989), (2) the question of national integration grappling with adopting English as the lingua franca or imposing a major language on other ethnic groups, (3) an extreme focus on national economic development (Ahmed, 1989), and (4) the triumph of the American System. Nigerian experts such as Babs Fafunwa and Adeniji Adaralegbe, trained in the United States, returned home to criticise the British system and proposed a 'newly imported' American education, notably in junior and secondary schools and university faculties (Omolewa, 1989, Tamuno and Atanda, 1989, Fafunwa, 1971).

This is not to claim that there were no attempts to scrutinise these external influences and problems of both local and foreign experts. In fact, a revolutionary approach was seen during the regimes of 1966 to 1979. This period witnessed the creation of the Language and Adult Education centre, the National Youth Service Corps programme, the reactivation of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Centre, the National University Commission, and the National Council on Education, along with the decision of the University of Ibadan to stop sending students to the UK for postgraduate education.

Within the discourse of the influence of the global on the local, I concur with Omolewa regarding education policy in Nigeria: international pressures and influences can be decisive only if those at the helm of affairs allow themselves to be guided by them. This is not to deny the value of the exchange of ideas but to draw attention to "the fact that the world is so unequal that the approach to world issues continues to be dictated by the level of development and values appreciated by certain countries over others" (p. 30). The paradox highlighted by Omolewa is similar to Claude Ake's scepticism regarding social science and political development theories in Africa as a form of imperialism. Ake refers to Eurocentric teleologism, arguing that the assertiveness of Third World countries and the struggle against colonialism and imperialism, drew the attention of Western scholars and experts, as seen in the growth of development studies in the 1980s (Ake, 1982). He reminds us that this tradition of scholarship on Third World countries was impregnated with "teleologic prospects for democracy (liberal democracy), modernisation project, and development thinly disguised as capitalist development" (ibid. p. 127). As already laid out in this section and further expressed in the next section, Ake also noted that the methodology associated with this teleologic

perspective was "how the question of the development of the Third World was tendentially reduced to the possibility of becoming like the West" (ibid., p.128).

### 4.2.2. 1969 Curriculum Conference

The National Curriculum Conference (NCC) of 1969, which orchestrated the production of the National Policy on Education (NPE), is regarded as a significant event in preparing and inauguring the path for the development of education in Nigeria. In essence, the National Policy on Education came to exist after the 'indivisibility' of Nigeria as a nation was almost pushed to the brink by putsches and the civil war of the 1960s (Fafunwa, 1991). The NCC can be seen as the first attempt to change the colonial trajectory (at least in principle) of the Nigerian educational system, its aim being to promote national consciousness and self-reliance through the educational process. Even after independence, the Nigerian education system had been criticised as being 'more British than the British': school children in Nigeria were being educated to meet the needs of a foreign culture and were, therefore, better fit for export than life in their own country (Fafunwa, 1989). This exemplifies what Grosfoguel (2013) described as being educated "by the West for the West".

The NCC was in response to the need to harmonise different education systems in the existing 12 states of the Nigerian federation at that time (Sampson, 1972 as cited in Akanbi and Abiolu 2018 p. 484 ). Notable education historians such as Adeniji Adaralegbe (1972) and Babs Fafunwa (1991) concur that the NCC marks the first time that Nigerians from all walks of life had the opportunity to deliberate by themselves on the aims and goals of an education suited to their children. Foreign observers at this conference commented that it was an "affirmation of faith in the democratic, participatory process of curriculum development" (Akanbi and Abiolu, 2018, p.486).

Out of the 65 recommendations proposed at the conference, seven recommendations focused on issues around national unity, citizenship, national consciousness, nationalism and national reconstruction. This underscores why education remains an instrument for nation building and national cohesion. Due to the ongoing civil war in the eastern region of the country, the recommendations of the conference were not taken up for about four years, premeditated the

first setbacks that plagued what became the National Policy on Education in 1977 (Fafunwa, 1991).

### 4.3. The Text: The National Policy on Education

This level of analysis involves examining the content, structure and intertexts of the NPE, predicated on the notion that texts are neither static nor fixed; rather, it is the reproducibility of texts that enables their consumption and re-interpretation(Smith, 2005, Murray, 2020). Thus, a text becomes transformed as a process or discourse that is constantly occurring, or what Fairclough refers to as "inter-textual chains of distribution that texts are entered or transformed into or out of" (Fairclough, 2004 p. 232). Since 1977, when the first version of the NPE was published, it has undergone six secondary adjustments or revisions. Out of the six editions, I looked at the overall structures of the 1981, 2004 and 2013 (latest). The evolution of the contents and structures of the three versions are useful for this analysis, as they present why the textual relations of disability inclusion remain contradictory and oscillatory. But a critical dimension that is of interest to my work, is how the versions of the NPE have presented the meanings of inclusion and disability and the evolution of these concepts.

An apparent paradox in the provision of equal educational opportunities, as presented in these texts, is the legacy of dividing Nigerian children into two distinct categories of 'normal and deviant' children. Section 8 of the 1981 version refers to "handicapped" children as different kinds of students "that cannot benefit or cope with the normal school class organisation and methods". While the word handicapped has since been removed from subsequent editions of NPE, the distinction that the policy created remains, and practitioners at the Federal University of Arewa still work and think along the normal/deviant divide. This path-dependent bifurcation has been sustained through research, teacher education, and policy (Walton and Engelbrecht, 2022) and is echoed in the sentiments of lecturers and support workers I spoke to in the three universities.

The table below shows some of the changes made to the Special Education Section of NPE between 1981 and 2013.

| Reading | 1981 | 2004 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Special Education** | Defined "as education of children and adults who have learning difficulty because of different sorts of handicaps; | Defined "as a formal special educational training of people (children and adults) with special needs. | Special **Needs** Education Defined "as a **customised educational programme** designed to meet the unique needs of persons with special needs **that the general education programme cannot cater for."** |
| **For Whom?** | "People with blindness, partial sightedness, deafness, hardness of hearing, mental retardation, social maladjustment, physical handicap, gifted and talented who are unable to cope with the normal school." | "These people may be classified as: **The Disabled, The Disadvantaged** (migrants, hunters, nomads)<br><br>**The Gifted and Talented** (people with high IQs)." | "Categories: Listed 9 disability categories with the addition of **Albinism** (Vision and Skin Problems, Lack of Self-esteem, Myth about Albinism, Stigmatization and Stereotypes)" |
| **How?** | This edition lacks clear direction on the implementation of special education. But proposes to take a census of all "**handicapped children** and adults by age, sex, locality and type."<br><br>(FME, 1981, pp 36-37) | Section 96c states that<br><br>"All necessary facilities that would ensure easy access to education shall be provided, e.g.: (i) inclusive education or integration of special classes and units into ordinary/public schools under the UBE scheme."<br><br>"Regular census and monitoring of people with special needs to ensure adequate educational planning and welfare programme." | To provide "Inclusive Education services in schools which 'normal' persons attend in age-appropriate general education classes directly supervised by general teachers."<br><br>"Special needs person who cannot benefit from inclusive education, special classes and units shall remain in special schools receiving quality of education in the other settings."<br><br>(FME, 2013 pp 52-56) |

*Table 7: Re-presentations of Special and Inclusive Education in the National Policy on Education*

### 4.4. The Post Text: The National Policy on Special Needs Education

The Special Education section of the National Policy on Education has now been developed into a separate policy document called the National Policy on Special Needs Education

(NPSNE), released by the Federal Ministry of Education in 2015. I will be taking this policy document as the "post-text" of this analysis. In other words, the text in this section is a post-text that was drawn and produced from the central text (NPE) presented in the last section. The policy document was produced by the Special Needs Education and Services branch of the Special Education Division of the Federal Ministry of Education (FME). This NPSNE draws inspiration and premise from the National Policy on Education published in 1977 and its editions, and it states that the government has decided to drive SNE based on the following principles.

> "Creating the least restrictive environment, Zero Reject, Total inclusion of persons with special needs within the ambience of societal operation, and diversification of services beyond the school setting to include the home and the hospital." (FME, 2015 p. i)

Mallam Ibraheem Shekarau, the then Minister of Education, mentioned in the foreword of the text that he was "delighted to pioneer the maiden edition of the National Policy on Special Needs Education and its implementation guidelines" as he believes that the practice of SNE in Nigeria would reflect "best global practices" for national development (ibid., p ii). This articulation of educational policy texts as aiming to align with global practice, even when local implementation is non-existent, begs the question as to whether these texts are just being 'put out there' to show international organisations that Nigeria is responsive to global policy debates and directions. There appears to be little concern with looking at how these practices play out in at the local level.

Further evidence that these policies were designed for the global international audience, is evident when the permanent secretary of the FME claimed that "interpolations, extrapolations, needs and challenges that were not in tandem with the global best practices had to be expunged from what the country has as a Policy". And that Nigeria must be bold to ask that those actions that are no longer in vogue with the world's best practices should be expunged from its policy and implementation guidelines (ibid p. iii)".

Statements of the minister and permanent secretary about the so-called 'neutrality of the global best practices' infer that adhering to and emphasising global best practices in policy texts has been 'sold' as the only way for Nigeria to meet its target for the Education for All agenda. Another explanation is that the country seems rather unclear about its current practices of

inclusion of people with disabilities in education and would rather 'expunge' and wish away some of the fundamental challenges facing education delivery in the country.

### 4.4.1. Labelling for Global Practice

The shift in the framing of "handicapped people" from previous versions of the National Policy on Education (NPE) to "persons with special needs" in the Special Needs Education (SNE) texts, is linked to the 'new thinking' in the political discourse of special needs education, brought about by UNESCO's Salamanca Process. Although Nigeria's special needs education policy emerged 21 years after the Salamanca Conference, it represents a milestone in developing policies for the education of people with disabilities and the path toward inclusive education, formalised in the 2016 publication.

Notably, the department within the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) overseeing this policy, is the Basic and Secondary Education department, suggesting that the special needs policy may be designed primarily for basic and post-basic education, not higher education. However, the document asserts that it is "the responsibility of the federal government to ensure the early completion of education programs for persons with special needs at the three educational levels (primary, secondary, and tertiary)" (FME, 2015, p.13). The philosophy behind SNE is to provide access to educational and other services opportunities for all citizens, at all levels of formal education and beyond the formal school system. This philosophy aligns with the 'education for all' principle in the National Policy on Education, indicating an intertextual or interlocking relationship (Fairclough 2003, Smith, 2005) with the NPE, and alignment with Nigeria's national education goals.

Regarding labelling, or 'nomenclature,' as the policy calls it, the ministry rejects the term 'physically challenged,' stating that it describes only a limited portion of persons with special needs and is therefore exclusionary. Instead, 'persons with special needs' encompasses all categories of persons with disabilities mentioned in Section 7 of the 2013 edition of the NPE. This shift in labelling aligns with the Ministry's broader focus on Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation services, leading to the creation of a dedicated Special Needs Education unit within the Basic and Secondary Education Department. This organisational restructuring mirrors UNESCO's approach, where Education for All and Inclusive Education are managed

by separate administrative units within the Basic Education section. While 'Inclusive Education' and 'Education for All' may seem synonymous, UNESCO treats them as distinct themes under 'Strengthening Education Systems' and 'Leading the International Agenda,' respectively(Kiuppis, 2014). An analysis of inclusive education's development requires considering how changes in the meaning of inclusion explain the logic behind organisational reconstruction, at both the FME and UNESCO.

### 4.4.2. Path-dependency and Many "Accents" of Inclusion

As Walton (2015) aptly points out, "inclusive education is (and has been) languaged by those who write and speak it." These 'languagers' wield power, either due to their status or influence, shaping inclusive education with various 'accents' and styles, much like languages. Those impacted by inclusive education discourse encompass actors in education, especially teachers and learners, and particularly those devalued by society and marginalised in education.

Special Needs Education (SNE) and Rehabilitation Services in this text are defined as the formal education provided to persons with special needs. It is structured to oversee Individual Educational Programmes (IEPs) to be implemented in schools, homes, and hospital settings, reflecting the belief that global best practices in SNE occur in these three settings (FME, 2015). SNE caters to three categories: People with Disabilities, Children/Youth at Risk, and Gifted and Talented Children/Youth. Section 11.0 acknowledges inadequacies in some areas of special needs and refers to the need for: upgrading existing facilities; constructing specialised facilities in centres and schools; providing disability-friendly architectural designs; and promoting the least restrictive environment.

This post-text recognises the limitations of the policy, drawing from higher-order texts like the National Policy on Education and the UBE (2004) Act. It affirms the need for a "functional legislative framework" to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, aligning with Dyson's (1999) right-based discourse of inclusive education. UNESCO's (2020) GMR reports on inclusion and education, highlight that countries often have more inclusive education policies than legislations, underscoring the necessity for political and institutional struggles to enact laws that will protect the rights of people with disabilities.

The document suggests that the FME aims to provide special needs education services within the existing mainstream system, similar to 'integration thinking' before Salamanca. It proposes that local governments pilot an "inclusive setting" to accommodate persons with special needs, aiming to eliminate segregation regimes established by missionaries in the late 19th century. UNESCO's GEM Report notes that combining mainstreaming with other approaches is a common trend globally, with approximately 5% of countries having provisions for segregated education settings and 45% combining mainstreaming with other approaches. The distribution of countries by school organisation for students with disabilities, as defined in policies, is illustrated in Figure 4.

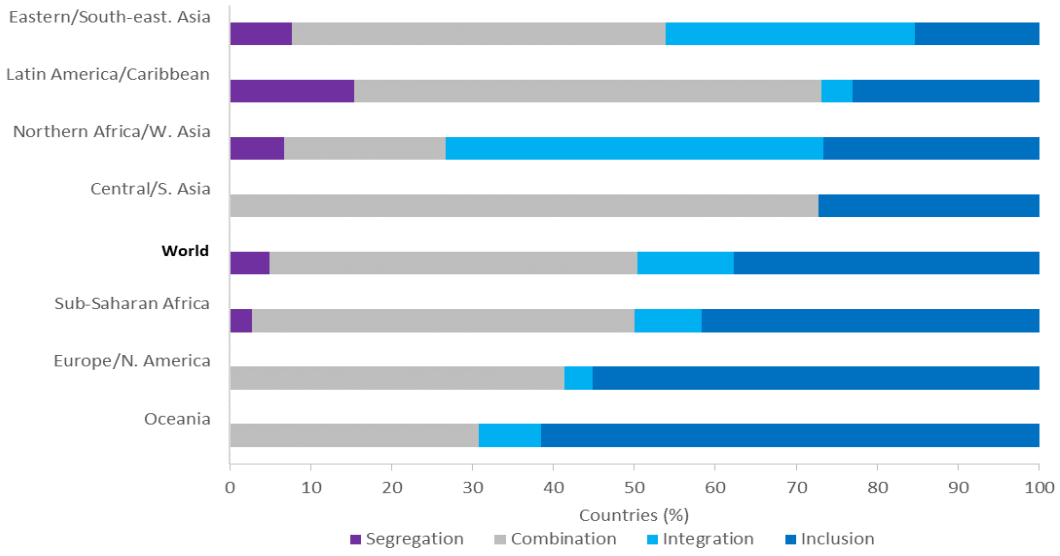



*Figure 4: Distribution of countries by school organisation for SWDs as defined in policies , by region, UNESCO, 2020.*

A corroborative dimension is evident in the education systems of postcolonial states, following path-dependent elitist, monastic, and hierarchical models that generated momentum toward excluding students with disabilities in various forms (Walton and Engelbrecht, 2022; Tikly, 2019). This path dependency results in 'policy stickiness,' where the costs of deviating from the established policy path become prohibitively high (Van Buuren et al., 2016). While many countries may embrace inclusive education in policy, school infrastructure and educational provisions often contend with the logics of the initial conditions that created this system.

### 4.5. Ensuing Con-text: The 'real' national policy on inclusive education

In the definition provided by Stanley (2018), the Ensuing Con-text refers to what transpires after the text has been produced and how it influences the broader context of an organisation or the larger socio-political landscape. While this perspective allows for a comprehensive socio-political analysis, I maintain a focus on intertextuality and interdiscursivity in this chapter, using the National Policy on Inclusive Education as my "ensuing" con-text. This choice is motivated by its incorporation of existing texts in this work and its representation of the current state of inclusive education in the Nigerian education system.

Within the Sub-Saharan region, Nigeria has formulated policies that support the full inclusion of Students with Disabilities (SWDs) in schools (UNESCO, 2020). However, the translation of these policies into practices across states and institutions within the federation, lacks coherence, with most states operating a combination of special settings, integrated, and inclusive schools. The Federal Ministry of Education, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, published the National Policy on Inclusive Education in 2016. Its stated aim was to deliver education for people with disabilities through an inclusive approach. This policy signifies a strategic shift, recognising the necessity for an education system that accommodates a diverse learner population (FME, 2016). Adopting UNESCO's call for inclusive education systems, irrespective of learners' conditions, Nigeria has sought to uphold a rights-based approach, aiming to reduce exclusion, promote access, equity, and participation.

In this sense, inclusive education is viewed as a means to provide quality education while removing barriers for various marginalised populations. While previous Nigerian education policies addressed specific categories individually, the novelty lies in bringing these groups together, as prescribed by the Salamanca Framework. This shift prompts consideration of the educational provisions for these groups under previous segregative regimes.

The rationale behind inclusive education also raises questions about whether it aligns with a capitalist logic that emphasises efficiency and productivity or prioritises social justice and impact over economic accumulation. The document draws sequentially from international conventions and frameworks, spanning from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 to the SDGs in 2015, revealing an intertextual connection with various discourses on the

'education for all' agenda. The policy envisions inclusive education as a means to achieve social integration and national unity, addressing differences across social, economic, political, ethnic, religious, and geographical strata. However, the implementation of inclusive education faces challenges, as observed during fieldwork at FUA, where some students expressed concerns about the lack of necessary support for SWDs in inclusive classrooms.

Nigeria's adoption of inclusive education aligns with the syncretic call for "Education for All" and "Inclusive Education," expanding the focus beyond students with disabilities. The policy employs the 'person first' principle by categorising individuals with special education needs as 'learners,' emphasising every child or youth's right to lifelong education. The policy outlines eight targets and corresponding strategies for implementation, emphasising rehabilitation and upgrading of schools, teacher training, public awareness, curriculum adaptation, and transforming special schools into resource centres. However, although there is a constant referral to NUC and other tertiary education commissions in the action plan, as key stakeholders responsible for some of the policy targets through the federal ministry of education, inclusive education in higher education institutions in this document has been glossed over or toned down as a non-issue. Again, one could wonder why a policy that reiterates the need for a radical change in Nigeria's approach to education, would delegate most of the funding sources to UNESCO, USAID, the World Bank and other international organisations bigfooting global education policies (see appendix H for a page from the texts). Apart from revealing the logic that drives the text production, it also explains why the policy implementation has been almost non-existent across the country.

The textual frame below shows the interlock between text, post text, and ensuing context.

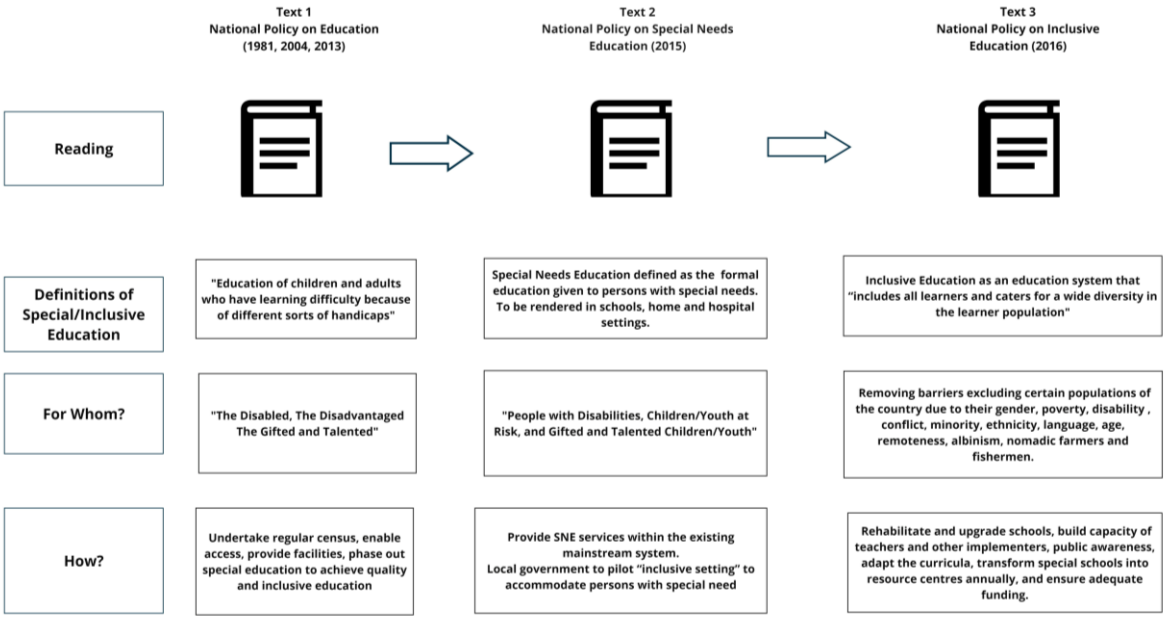



*Figure 5 Reading Frame for the Key Texts*

### 4.6. How inclusive education texts "occur" in practice

I am interested in showing how the discourse(s) apparent in the textual analysis above shape what happens in practice. I look firstly at how an organisational unit at FUA, responsible for supporting SWDs, struggles with the technical evolution of inclusive education discourse and how that path-dependent logic is undermining the university's policies for disability inclusion. Essentially, I examine how these texts are "occurring" (Deveau, 2016) or not 'occurring', as people in the university carry out daily work. I do so by looking at how people understand the meanings of disability and the implications this has for the organisation of inclusion policy and practice at FUA.

The Deaf Support Centre at FUA was created in 1990 as a pilot scheme to address the underrepresentation of students with hearing impairments in Nigerian universities (DSC, 2016). It was created alongside a centre meant to cater to students with visual impairment in another federal university elsewhere in the country. The deputy director admin (DDADMIN) of the DSC mentioned that:

> "The major aim of having the centre then was to reduce the cost of educating those with disabilities abroad. The federal government looked inward and saw that the finance to educate people with special needs abroad was too exorbitant. They started the pilot project for this centre. It was established alongside the Blind Support Centre at (named university). Only two universities were picked for the pilot" (Interview, DDADMIN).

The National Policy on Education gave the impetus for these segregations, looking at how it has made provisions for 'special schools and homes for the classes of handicapped children' in the past. The assumption was that different types of handicaps required different schools, hence creating schools for the blind, schools for the deaf and schools for the gifted and talented. This "prevailing dual-track thinking" (Kalinnikova Magnusson and Walton, 2021) gave birth to the creation of the Deaf Support Centre and the Blind Support Centre. As argued by Walton and Engelbrecht (2022), following the special and ordinary schooling system has meant that increasing access to separate special schooling is seen as the solution to the very real problem of the exclusion of SWDs. For SWDs, this means that their needs or support could only be met at two universities in the whole of Nigeria. By implication, when seeking admission to university education, Visually Impaired (VI) students can only attend the university with a Blind Support Centre, and the Hearing Impaired (VI) can only attend FUA. Obviously, this has been challenged both from inside and outside of the university, as the rights of people with disabilities to higher education are becoming prominent within the public domain; universities have now been forced to "open their doors" to all students regardless of their needs (Interview, DAP, FUA), even though their experience remains precarious.

Throughout my stay at the DSC, there was a conflict between the name of the centre and the services it provides. I asked the DDADMIN about the initial mandate of the centre and he stated that,

> "The mandate for the centre was to cater for the hearing-impaired students alone. But as of today, so many special needs people have been coming on board into the centre. The centre is equally *extending* its service to them. We have about 25 visually impaired students; we have 25 deaf students and we have physically challenged numbering up to you 20 that we provide supportive services for. The major task of this centre is to assist people with special needs" (Interview, DDADMIN).

The account presented by the DD explains the evolution of the discourse on disability inclusion policy: starting with the provision of educational services and support for a certain

group of students hinged on the directions of the national policy on education. The DD's usage of 'deaf students', 'hearing impaired' and 'special needs' is a point in the case on how practitioners deploy these evolving concepts as they carry out their work. While the centre's name has the 'deaf' signifier, with a picture of the outer ear as the centre's logo, it has been working to be inclusive in terms of the centre's scope. However, because it lacks the resources and personnel to support other categories of students, it has not changed its name since its inception.

Students, especially those from the visually and physically impaired communities, told me about their agitations for a name change for the centre. For them, the name of the centre is not only exclusionary, but impedes serious commitment from the university to see the centre as it is meant to be. In my conversation with Asake, a visually impaired student at FUA, I asked about the support she received from the DSC, and she used the same word the DD used to describe the 'extension' of their support service. The following is an excerpt from our conversation:

> Abass: What do you think the DSC can do to support your experience on campus?
>
> Asake: They are not [supportive], from what I really know about them. They do not really have much support towards the VI [Visually Impaired], because the last meeting we had. They said that initially, which is true. They're not majorly for the visually impaired people. They are here for the hearing-impaired students. So they're just trying to extend their activities to the visually impaired. If they are based on orientations or based on a whole lot of reforms or probably our presence.

Asake's take on the contradictions between the name and functions of the centre is that the centre was not only responding to policy struggles but also to the fact that their 'presence on campus' has unsettled the equilibrium of the centre. I asked the DD what he thought about this concern from other SWDs, who feel that the logic of action of the centre is focused on a particular kind of disability, limiting other students from seeking support due to a lack of professionals who can take care of their needs:

> "Abass: Do you think the name of the centre is limiting the scope of the centre?

> DDADMIN: We are very funny. We do things that when you hear it, you just laugh. The purpose for establishing this centre has undergone some kind of transformation. At the time the centre was established, how many universities, how many deaf students, how many VI people do we have that time, what about [people with] autism. The objective of the establishment has been obsolete. The centre is overdue to have a second thought about the mandate of the centre. In practice it has changed but in policy it is still the same. So there is need to have a very comprehensive name that will encompass all people with disabilities. We should think of changing the name to serve as a sensitisation to the people of the world that yes, we have a university taking care of disability to the letter. If the normal students see the way we treat them, they will take care of them."

He mentioned issues around the scope of the centre and how it has become counterproductive in the face of the new challenges and diversity that higher education in Nigeria has witnessed in the last three decades. But how responsive in terms of policy and resources, are these institutions to addressing the needs of students and practitioners who enact the policy at the grassroots level?

In the discursive struggle at the institutional and societal level, as noted by Fairclough (2004), such contradictions and dilemmas have their social conditions and maybe, to some extent contribute to the preservation and reproduction of traditional hegemonic power relations (p.96). What could be of interest here is how these discursive relations are capable of functioning and constructing identities. This identity function of discourses of disability given by the framing and classifying of people on the bases of how much or less they have been marginalised and controlled, is seen in this account shared by Olutoyin, a VI student at FUA:

> "When I was growing up, my grandma said she wished I was deaf. When I started going through school, I did not wish for it kind of, because they can't really express themselves. I met one of them at the park. We couldn't communicate, I asked the person where are you headed? she was not answering me. I felt maybe the person was not in the mood. So when we got down, the person just dragged my hand. I said where are you going to? I am going to Kaduna hostel. The person did not even answer me. I was like, what's wrong with this person? So, when we got to the porters. I had to speak out. I asked the woman what was wrong with the person. And they said the person is hearing impaired" (Interview, Olutoyin, VI FUA).

With a constant distinction being made between "normal and disabled students", or "VI and HI", the ongoing classification and bifurcation of the student population at FUA becomes

more problematic when interrogating the classification codes that DSC has used in framing the scope of their work, as they told me that they only cater for the clusters HI, VI, and PC. Bernstein argues that policies or rules in themselves do not constitute a code; it is how these rules position interactions and discourse that reveal the code and whose interests the code serves (Bernstein, 1996). With the evolution of inclusive education policy, as pursued by the FME and other related apparatuses, there are what Fairclough (2004) described as "facets of contradictory and unstable equilibrium" in how SWDs have been discursively framed, classified and articulated. Let's look at how Patrick and Sophia capture their understanding of "coming" to know disability:

> "Patrick: I was born with partial sight. Well, let me say, throughout my primary school, I did not actually know whether I was partially blind, until even in Junior School one. I do not know if I'm partially blind because it doesn't affect me. I do not even really know how to explain it. I know I have a scar here, others do not have. But I do not know it's different because what they use their eyes for, I can use my eyes for it. So, I do not know until, let's say my Junior school and more prominently" (Interview with Patrick, FUA).

> "Sophia: I lost my sight in 2015. Totally, I woke up one day and just total darkness. My sister was there, she was the one doing everything. She also fell sick the first week of December of that same year. And she was paralysed for like six months… She died in June 2016. That was when I realised I was blind. I did not notice I was blind because she was doing everything, and I did not care. People did not know, like all my needs were still met. That was when I realised, okay. This is actually for real. I had to start putting my life together" (Interview with Sophia, FUA).

As Patrick and Sophia relate with the existing discourse of abled or disabled, they are entered into a certain frame of consciousness, through the transformation of not only existing orders of discourse, but through the intertextual rearticulation of prior codes and conventions that created these hegemonic relations in the first place. Revisiting the domains of the colonial matrix of power (CMP) explicated by Mignolo (2018), CMP, according to Mignolo, is held together by flows that emanate from the enunciation (the terms of conversations and the rhetoric of modernity). Through the interconnections of the domains of knowledge, meanings and languaging, the question of subjectivity and subject formation emerges (ibid p. 145). What this means is the coloniality of power as represented by the discourses of inclusive education, is involved in the creation of a particular person/subjects and institutions. This reminds us that policies that have gained discursive traction will continue to manage and control the

'thinking and being', unless there is a critical understanding of the locus of enunciation (terms of conversation), the motives or teleology of the enunciator (experts and institutions), and the unintended consequences of the enunciated (content of conversation)(Mignolo and Walsh, 2018).

## 4.7. Conclusion

The objective of this chapter has been to demonstrate how discourses contribute to the construction of social identities (identity function), social relations (relational function) and systems of knowledge and meaning (ideational function) (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2010) through a critical read of the evolution of the Nigerian inclusive education policies. Some of the key texts analysed here, including the National Policy on Education, have laid the foundation for other texts that have created the meanings, framing and articulation of the rights of persons with disabilities and demands for an 'inclusiveness' of the system. However, the inclusion and participation of SWDs in practice, mean different things to students with disabilities, support staff, academic staff and managers, following the interwoven professional, public and policy domains of inclusive education discourses, as illustrated (Walton, 2015).

Following some scholars within the field of inclusive education (Walton, 2015, Roger, 2009, Dyson, 1999, Armstrong et al., 2011, Liasidou, 2008) who have analysed the interpretive and translation codes of inclusive education as discourses, I have also argued that inclusive education discourses within the Nigerian higher education space, have had hegemonic effects on the social practices of disability inclusion. Even though 'labelling' discourses might be a tentative exercise (Walton, 2015) because they morph as they move, I have roughly located Nigerian Inclusive Education policies within a limited number of discourses which include rights-based, efficacy, political and practical discourses (Dyson, 1999). While these discourses have constructed different notions of inclusion, who is being included and how to do inclusion, they also overlap. In other words, their boundaries are sometimes obliterated and moreover, can change over time. Thus, the distinctions discussed in this chapter need to be seen as tentative rather than unproblematic.

## Chapter 5. "Taking Contexts Seriously"

*"Policy creates context, but context also precedes policy."*

*(Ball et al, 2012 p.19 )*

### 5.1. Introduction

From the previous chapter on inclusive education policies in Nigeria, this chapter takes a step further by answering how universities in this study have translated the provisions of the "official policymaking machinery" into their contexts of implementation. It seeks to explain how the prescriptions of these higher-order or macro texts are interpreted and translated into institutional strategies and approaches. It is an attempt to "take context seriously" as Ball et al. (2012) explain: contextual dimensions are essential in education policy enactment, not just the backdrop under which institutions operate. Policies are shaped and influenced by contexts-specific factors such as resource environments, histories, buildings, infrastructures and leaderships. This chapter shows how unique institutional artefacts mediate the interpretations and translation of disability inclusion policies. In so doing, it draws on the works of Ball et al. (2012), (Tierney and Lanford, 2018), and Thornton et al. (2012), to analyse how different components of institutional cultures shape policy enactment at FUA, while at the same time paying attention to the constraints, pressures and enablers of the policy process. This analysis contributes to the understanding of how material conditions, including coloniality, set the policy process in motion.

Ball et al. (2012) offered a typology of policy contexts, including situated context, professional cultures, and material and external contexts (p. 21). This typology, as developed by Ball et al. (2012), does not look at the leadership dimension of context. Yet I found leadership to be a substantial factor in the process of policy enactment at FUA, KSU and APU. I have therefore adapted this "context of enactment framework" (see table 8 below) to include "leadership contexts". I examine how varied leadership and decision-making arrangements have influenced the policy process at FUA while also drawing examples from the other two universities. The first part of this chapter *situates* the ideological representation of disability inclusion policies in strategic documents of the three universities as situated context. It is

important to note that it is only the situational part of the section that compares the three universities' strategies for inclusion. The rest of the section focuses exclusively on FUA's policy management by looking at the tension generated by the leadership mechanism, the *professional cultures* of supporting SWDs through academic advising and support. I also present some *material contexts* of inclusion, such as building, transportation and hostel accommodation by looking at the accessibility audit of the Faculty of Education at FUA, while also drawing on my observations as a participant on the campus.

Smith (2005) described the institution as "functional complexes" mediated by thoughts, cultures, rationality and consciousness, which are then reconstructed into objectified forms of social relations that "hook them up to what others are doing elsewhere and elsewhen" (p. 229). Dissecting the policy contexts in which disability inclusion is organised, enables us to see how policy work is institutionally coordinated and to map the active roles of agents within the institutional process.

| **Contextual Dimensions** | **Analytical Components** |
|---|---|
| **Situated Contexts** | Histories, Mission Statements and Inclusion Apparatus and Enrolments. |
| **Leadership Contexts** | Leadership Cultures, Decision-making process, Ownership, and Information. |
| **Professional Cultures** | Academic Advising, Disability Supports, Social Interaction. |
| **Material Contexts** | Transportation, Accommodation and Baseline Accessibility Audits. |

*Table 8: Contextual Dimensions of Policy Enactment (Adapted from Ball et al. 2012)*

## 5.2. Situated Contexts

In this section, situated contexts refer to those factors that are "historically and locationally linked' (Ball et al. 2012) to the case under study. These include the histories, missions and

objectives of the FUA, KSU and APU concerning disability inclusion policies. An organisational document that could reveal this is a university's strategic plan. This is true as this study sees texts as a constellation of people's doing, what they have done and what they are planning to do. During my fieldwork, I solicited these plans from the academic planning units of the three universities. At FUA, I was given plans from 2003 till 2023; for APU and SKU I obtained plans between 2018-2022 and 2009-2016, respectively. These documents offer some foray into the history of the universities and how some of their mission statements and values have become artefacted into their institutional cultures and success stories. What I show here is how the three universities have presented their strategies, specific policy responses in relation to disability inclusion, and their enrolment of SWDs.

### 5.2.1. Federal University of Arewa's Inclusion Strategy

Mission statements serve as tangible artefacts reflecting the essence of university culture (Fugazzotto, 2009). Often reduced to slogans by top administrators, these statements encapsulate the institution's core values. In my visits to university offices, I consistently encountered principal officers proudly displaying mission and vision statements on plaques or banners. These statements permeated our conversations, with the university's mission frequently invoked as a selling point, as exemplified by the bursar of FUA, who reiterated the institution's slogan throughout our interview. It was evident that officers who interacted regularly with students, distilled these lofty missions into simple, memorable phrases, presenting them as the cherished values of the university. A Student Affairs officer elucidated the university's pursuit of developing a "total man" (sic), emphasising the importance of students acquiring knowledge and demonstrating exemplary character, aligning with Chaffee (1985) "interpretive strategy" for framing organisational metaphors.

However, the university's strategies for disability inclusion only surface prominently in the strategic plan covering the period 2019-2023. FUA, in this plan, asserts its commitment to equity and justice, outlining policy objectives to foster an inclusive university culture. Notably, the strategic plan sets the objective for FUA to be in the top 5% in Nigeria, explicitly stating the need to uphold the federal government's policy on the employment and admission of physically challenged individuals (FUA, 2019). The plan further commits to maintaining current welfare packages for all students, with specific consideration for the unique needs of

physically challenged students. Terms such as 'providing,' 'ensuring,' 'sustaining,' and 'improving', characterise the university's actions and plans. As Smith contends, language is integral to social organisation, serving as a medium through which ideas and beliefs integrate into the coordination of people's activities (p.76). Within its student experience goals, FUA acknowledges the necessity of welfare packages for "physically challenged" students, a term criticised by the FME as exclusionary. Beyond this, SWDs contend with generic issues such as hostel accommodation, healthcare services, and the campus transport system, mirroring the challenges faced by their peers.

To sustain and improve the support facilities for the physically challenged, the university also plans to do the following.

> "i. Enlarge the goals and objectives of the Deaf Support Centre to embrace other people with disabilities.
> ii. Confirm disability status during pre-admission screening and staff selection interview.
> iii. Sustaining and improving support for staff and students with disabilities.
> iv. Expand the special disability assessment and counselling unit.
> v. Maintain and improve access to all university facilities.
> vi. Make all university facilities user-friendly for people with special needs.
> vii. Ensure affirmative action for people with disabilities during the selection process" (FUA, 2019).

To operationalise the outlined initiatives, collaborative efforts are required from various university units, including the Vice-Chancellor's Office, Registry, Admission Office, Deaf Support Centre (DSC), Counselling Unit, Physical Planning Unit (PPU), Students Affairs Unit (SAU), and Works Department. The planning committee, anticipating the need for effective execution, points out the necessity of widespread dissemination and continuous monitoring of the strategic plan.

However, interviews conducted with managers across these units, revealed a concerning lack of awareness regarding the provisions of the strategic plan pertaining to students with

disabilities. The Registrar, when questioned about the communication and implementation of the plan, underscored the importance of staff engagement and awareness. She indicated the need for all staff to understand the plan thoroughly, recognise their roles in its realisation, and actively contribute to its achievement. Her remarks highlighted the challenge of achieving meaningful impact when there is a gap in disseminating critical information. This lack of awareness has repercussions, particularly affecting the Deaf Support Centre's (DSC) understanding of the university's inclusion plan. During my interactions with the deputy directors of the DSC, they revealed that although they participated in the meeting leading to the creation of the strategic plan, they had never seen a copy of the document. This disconnect between policy creation and its reception, aligns with Ball's perspective on policies as contested, mediated, and differentially represented across contexts (Ball, 2015).

Ball's concept of "policy as discourse" becomes particularly relevant in understanding the DSC's approach to inclusion work. Despite being actively engaged in inclusion efforts both before and after the production of the strategic plan, the lack of clear guidance from the document has led them to operate based on implicit knowledge and assumptions. This observation underscores the notion that the inclusion policy at FUA functions as a set of discourses that both constrains and enables actions, shaping the narratives around the participation of SWDs (Ball, 2015; Smith, 2005). The following excerpt from my notes at the DSC captures the essence of my discussion with the deputy directors about the university's policy for disability inclusion:

> I asked the deputy directors of the centre about the University's strategic plan. They said they had never seen a copy of the document. I opened the document and showed them the pages where disability inclusion has been mentioned. I read a bit of surprise on their face when they realised the university had budgeted some funds for the centre to execute a section of the plan that deals with the centre. They said, "Thank you very much, Mr Abass; *now we have what we can use against them to get funds for the centre*." They requested that I should share the document with them, which I did via emails (Fieldnotes, 23/11/2021).

### *The Deaf Support Centre*

Schools not only become defined by the composition of their student body, but also actively contribute to shaping their identity based on it (Ball et al., 2012). Members of school communities, including teachers, weave narratives about their institutions, grounded in

personal experiences and broader generalisations (ibid p. 22). At FUA, senior staff are swift to proclaim the university as the only institution in Nigeria seriously practising inclusive education. They emphasise the welcoming environment for students with disabilities, attributing it to the presence of a dedicated centre that caters to their needs, irrespective of their impairments.

While FUA's strategic plan lacks explicit reference to the National Policy on Education regarding students with disabilities, insights from the Deaf Support Centre's (DSC) handbook shed light on the university's pioneering role in including deaf students in higher education in Nigeria. Originating from successful attempts in the 1980s to provide basic education for SWDs through special schools, the government identified deaf students as a feasible policy choice for university education. However, the joy of admission to Nigerian universities for academically gifted deaf students often turns to frustration due to communication challenges or the universities advising withdrawal due to inadequate support services (DSC, 2016).

In response to these challenges, the Federal Government organised a conference in 1988 to discuss and recommend solutions for qualified Deaf candidates pursuing higher education in Nigeria. The conference, held at the Federal Ministry of Education headquarters on May 18, 1988, highlighted the necessity of providing university education for the deaf in Nigeria, instead of sending them abroad. FUA emerged as the recommended location for the pilot project in the education of the deaf and hearing impaired at the tertiary level, aligning with the national objective of integrating disabled individuals into the larger society. This decision, however, diverged from the segregation policy proposed by the national policy on education, which advocated for a separate university for the deaf.

Described as the "first deaf support centre in Africa," the DSC was subsequently created in the Faculty of Education at FUA to spearhead the project. Initially funded by the Federal Ministry of Education for a few years, the centre eventually transitioned to FUA's financial responsibility. However, the administration of the DSC has faced challenges, with the current deputy directors, among the centre's early staff, acknowledging that their enduring commitment is fuelled by their "passion for disability inclusion." The history of the DSC

reflects a complex journey marked by both achievements and precarious moments, as the following accounts from Deputy Director Administration illustrate:

> "When we started, the road was very rough, we had issues with the management because this programme was a pilot programme of the Federal Ministry of Education funded by the federal ministry. But it got to a stage where there was no adequate communication between the centre and the ministry. In terms of policy, things just went wrong. The federal government suspended the provision for the centre. It put some of us that were staff into a serious problem. I think it lasted for about six years. There was an issue with who is the owner of the centre" (DDADMIN, Interview, FUA).

During the early stages of the centre's development, the Dean of the Faculty assumed administrative responsibilities, until its formal establishment as a dedicated centre in 1999. This transformation was driven by the escalating number of SWDs seeking university education. However, the initial positioning within the Faculty of Education set a precedent, influencing the types of courses SWDs would pursue. Despite later opening its services to students across faculties, the lingering perception of the centre as an extension of the Faculty of Education persisted and explains why SWDs are likely to be cleared to study a course within the faculty of education (I explore this further in chapter 5). The centre's gradual expansion has been hindered by limitations in staff capacity. According to the DDACAD, the current staff comprises nine sign language interpreters or "signers." The organisational structure includes a director, two deputy directors (one with academic responsibilities and the other with administrative duties), and senior signers at different levels (7, 8, and 9). This staffing composition reflects the centre's specialisation in providing support services primarily for the deaf, with limited expertise in addressing the diverse needs of other disabled student clusters.

Leadership roles at the DSC, appointed by the vice-chancellor, involve Faculty of Education professors taking turns as directors, with leadership changing every two years. The deputy directors, both professionals in their roles, express the view that this leadership arrangement has impacted the centre's ability to promote disability inclusion at FUA effectively. The DDACAD, when discussing interactions with the Director, highlighted the following concerns:

> "The director is our intermediary with the administration. Although, most of the time we go there together because there are some questions she might be

> asked, and she will not have the answer. She was just assigned as a director because she came from her own department. She did not start with us. She doesn't really know everything about the centre. But we have been here from the scratch, we know everything about the centre" (DDACAD, Interview).

***Students Enrolment***

Data from the admission office reveals that since 2013, a total of 87 students have identified as having disabilities, with 62% being male and 38% female; the majority have enrolled in the Faculty of Education. However, the DDACAD points out a significant 'disclosure problem' at FUA, where a considerable number of students may not disclose their disability status due to concerns about the perceived mildness or severity of their impairments. This lack of disclosure often stems from uncertainty about how support needs will be addressed, leading students to opt not to disclose their disabilities.

The following excerpts highlight a conflict between students who are hesitant to be perceived as "needing help" and the DSC, which is simultaneously attempting to establish that it caters to specific disability categories. Despite declaring the nature of their impairments during the application process, students are required to register at the DSC as service users. The DDACAD characterises physically challenged individuals as potential outcasts or deviants, emphasising the challenge of getting these students to access the centre. The reluctance, as observed, stems from practical concerns about the physical inaccessibility of the DSC building. This issue poses a significant barrier, especially for students who require walking aids, as they must rely on the assistance of strangers to navigate an inaccessible building when seeking support to develop an accessibility plan for their university education. A subsequent section in this chapter provides further insights into my accessibility audit of FUA buildings.

> Abass: So why do you think students do not want to disclose their disability status or seek support?
>
> DDACAD: Some of them think they can cope even without any help. They try to think they can help themselves. But the visual and the hearing impaired, they know that they need assistance, so they will want to come out. The physically challenged only have mobility problems; once they can solve that, they do not need anybody's assistance.

### 5.2.2. Kosigi State University's Inclusion Strategy

KSU's vision and mission underscore a commitment to developing a holistic approach to education, one that is tailored to Nigeria's needs within a dynamic international context. However, the university's strategic plan lacks explicit references to disability or, indeed, other equity-related issues such as gender, religion, and ethnicity. The core values, encapsulated in being a World-Class university, community development, ICT-driven initiatives, fund generation and financial independence, entrepreneurship, and skills development, reflect a market-driven approach that is distinctively different from observations made at FUA.

At the time of the study, KSU was finalising its strategic plan for another cycle. Access to institutional documents proved challenging, with the Registrar initially considering the strategic plan a "private" document. After securing approvals, the Director of Academic Planning Unit eventually provided an expired version, expressing reluctance to share the upcoming plan, out of fear that the university's strategy would be "stolen". Despite assurances from the Chair of the ethics committee about the inclusion of disability-related aspects, a search through the second edition of the strategic plan (2014-2019) yielded no mention of disability inclusion. By contrast, the special education department at KSU, where the study primarily focused, plays a crucial role. Offering a degree programme to train specialist teachers as "learning and behavioural strategists," the department addresses special educational needs and barriers to learning. It distinguishes between high and low incidence disabilities, emphasising a shift towards high-incidence disabilities like developmental, emotional, and behavioural disorders, alongside the traditional curriculum for special education training in Nigeria.

The commitment of the department to high-incidence disabilities aligns with negotiations with the National Universities Commission (NUC) accreditation team. This approach reflects a nuanced perspective on disability inclusion within the university, emphasising a focus on often-overlooked high-incidence disabilities. Professor Alkali, a leading figure in the department, highlighted their efforts to secure recognition for this unique aspect of the special education programme, during interactions with the NUC accreditation team:

> "Other departments of special education focus too much on low incidence disability, essentially people with disabilities that are physical like the blind, and

> the deaf, a little on people with mental retardation, and emotional and behavioural disorders which the vice-chancellor here told me they did not want to duplicate what is happening in other places. But when the NUC sent a curriculum team here, they said No! we must follow what others are doing. We told them, okay, we will incorporate all the basics they are doing in other places and emphasise high-incidence disabilities. Which I think is good enough" (Prof Alkali, Interview KSU).

At KSU, the special education department operates with a modest academic staff capacity of 10 lecturers across different ranks. The department includes two non-academic staff members, who specialise as braille machine operators and a sign language interpreter. According to the head of the department, they have thus far recruited only four students with hearing impairment. Support for these students primarily comes from either sign language experts among the academic staff or the non-academic staff employed specifically for support services.

While an explicit policy response to disability inclusion in higher education is not readily discernible at KSU, the structure of its special education programme aligns with the principles outlined in the National Inclusive Education policy, addressing a broad spectrum of factors that may pose barriers to learning. Despite the absence of a dedicated support centre or explicit strategic objectives for disability inclusion, the special education programme reflects a commitment to inclusivity, in line with government provisions.

### 5.2.3. Alenje Private University's Inclusion Strategy

Alenje Private University (APU) is the foremost private university in the state and is owned by an Islamic foundation. As a university with a strong religious orientation, its strategic mission is to be an institution where "morality and spirituality are well blended with sound academic knowledge while maintaining a world-class standard" (APU, 2014). The university sees the inequality of access to higher education in Nigeria as a significant problem for the country on the one hand and posits this gap as a market opportunity for private providers on the other. As a private university in a supply-driven system of education like Nigeria, the admission officer admitted that numbers are vital to the university as a corporate entity (Tuchman, 2009). The university invests so much in the advertisement and recruitment of admission seekers, collaborating with school owners in the geopolitical zone to encourage their graduates to enrol at APU. These feeder schools also provide students who could easily assimilate into APU's strong Islamic ethos and relations. It is important to note that APU has

the most responsive website among the three cases, with promotional videos and digital learning platforms embedded for about 100 programmes across seven faculties. This is typical of fee-charging universities who do not have a ready-made "market" or are sought-after like FUA and KSU. As the only private university in the city centre, it sees itself as a provider of professional certification, micro-credentials and vocational studies serving professionals looking to upskill without interruption.

### *Alenje Private University's Plan and Disability Inclusion*

Using the same search words to comb the strategic plan, it only returned a paragraph where "disabilities" was mentioned, to fit the university's strategy within the National Policy on Education. According to the plan, "every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or unimagined disabilities each according to his or her ability." Other parts of the document suggest that APU, through its plan, takes cognisance of issues around equity and access to higher education. Even though it has been described as one of the most affordable private universities in Nigeria, APU's tuition is costly compared to state and federal universities. In terms of enrollment, APU has had only eight SWDs since 2010. Consequently, it does not have a standard disability support unit like FUA, but it has employed two support staff since 2010, one of whom subsequently moved from APU to FUA's centre for support services. The disability officer for the university told me they have been working at APU since 2013. In what they considered to be a "huge undertaking" for the university to employ sign language for just a student because of the students' population, they said "I also work with the General Studies Unit, even though my employment letter says "sign language interpreter", my duties are not limited to sign language interpreting".

The General Studies Unit, with four staff members, administers 14 accredited courses taken by all students on campus. The disability officer talked about their constant engagement with students from various departments, where they had to "deal with missing results and course allocation to lecturers." Their responsibilities as disability officers include following SWDs to classes based on their lecture timetable. As the manager of the disability experience on campus, they also report to the director of the general studies unit.

| Nature Of Disability | Gender | YEAR OF ENTRY | YEAR OF GRADUATION | No of Students |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Deafness | Male | 2010 | 2013 | 3 |
| Deafness | Female | 2012 | 2015 | 1 |
| Deafness | Male | 2013 | 2017 | 1 |
| Hard-of-Hearing | Female | 2014 | 2018 | 1 |
| Blindness | Male | 2016 | 2019 | 1 |
| Deafness | Male | 2019 | To date | 1 |
| Total | | | | 8 |

*Table 9: APU's Statistics of Students with Disabilities Since 2013*

### 5.3. Leadership Contexts

This section provides a brief overview of FUA's leadership arrangements, how information is circulated, leadership culture and the decision-making process. In tying together a research framework on institutional cultures in HE, Tierney suggests that researchers "who want to know how things are done around here" should ask questions like "What holds this place together? Is it mission, values, bureaucratic procedures, or strong personalities? How does this place run and what does it expect from its leaders?" (Tierney, 2006). These questions, he argues, are essential to understanding the specific steps institutions use to socialise the individual to align with the organisation's belief system and the management of meaning and social integration. While I have loosely mentioned how leadership roles in the three universities are organised in the last section, this section gives further context on leadership structures at the three universities.

#### 5.3.1. Leadership Structure

Leadership at FUA is to an extent decentralised, while major financial and strategic decisions are with the vice-chancellor. As a federal university, the president of the federation is the Visitor, with some statutory roles delegated to the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the

Governing Council. In between the Visitor and Pro-Chancellor is the Chancellor, with primarily ceremonial responsibilities during convocations and meetings. As in other public universities in Nigeria, chancellors are appointed by the president of the country and are mostly political, traditional and religious leaders. The vice-chancellor is the university's chief executive officer, supported by three deputy vice-chancellors, a bursar, registrar, and university librarian, all regarded as the principal officers of the university management. The governing council, however, consists of the principal officers, pro-chancellor and other co-opted external members appointed by the federal government.

FUA operates a delegated leadership with heads of departments, deans of faculties and directors of directorates. The VC is responsible for appointing the director for the Deaf Support Centre. The directorate reports to the deputy VC Academic Affairs, who in turn reports to the VC. As a centre formerly attached to the Faculty of Education, all the directors who have headed the centre, have been from the faculty. Most of the directors are associate professor and professors in their academic fields. They are expected to manage the centre's affairs, supported by two deputy directors who are professionals in disability support services. This arrangement has been met with some political resistance between the professionals working at the centre and the appointed directors. One of the deputy directors described the appointed academic managers as "arrowheads" that they must propel throughout their tenure as the centre's head. The excerpt below captures what the deputy thinks about the conflict between the institution's logic of rules and practices:

> "And by the structure of the university, most of the directors they bring are not professionals. They do not understand the chemistry of people with disabilities. Our first job is to train people at the helm of affairs on how to relate with people and what is happening in special education. The director will ask what the direction is and by the structure of the university they come here as heads. Each time they bring directors, you have to work with them. If you have a boss who doesn't understand the nature of the work and you have somebody that has been on that job. The major work of the director will only be as the arrowhead. Most of the work will be done by the deputy director, feeding the director. If there is a policy from the top, it is the deputy director that will interpret it correctly" (DDADMIN, DSC, FUA).

This represents one of the "networks of social logics" (Glyson and Howarth, 2007) that characterise the organisation of disability inclusion policy at FUA. This logic involves classification or segregationism, distinguishing those with the capacity to govern their affairs

from those who must be governed. The description provided aligns with Smith's concept of "work knowledge" (2005, p.151). Smith views work knowledge within an institutional framework as having two dimensions. The first involves the person's experience in their own work, encompassing what they do, how they do it, and what *they feel or think* (emphasis mine). The second aspect pertains to the implicit coordination of their work with the work of others. This is akin to the way in which the deputy director described their work in relation to other "professionals" and the directors the centre received, or, to use Smith's term, "the nebulous they." This advances the notion of work in IE, directing attention to what someone is doing that makes the "institution happen," whether they are recognised in institutional discourse or not (ibid, p. 157).

> "I think for the centre to really move very fast. We that know the beginning of the centre should be allowed to head the centre. That is when the centre will move fast. Because they are not special educators, they do not know anything about special education; maybe they are administrative directors. Because they will come, we must train them about what is happening. After training, that may spend one or three years. After the three years of the tenure is over, another person will come. Then we start all over again" (DDACAD, Interview FUA).

However, these frontiers of working/social relations at FUA are under contention by these professionals, signalling a subtle resistance to the hegemony of professors being assigned to the centre. According to the university's employment structure, the minimum qualification to become a director of a directorate is a PhD. Consequently, these deputy directors are currently enrolled in doctoral programmes within the university, aspiring to attain the qualifications necessary to lead the centre eventually. As expressed by one of the deputy directors, they believe that the centre will "truly progress rapidly" if professionals like them are given the opportunity to assume leadership roles, as many of the appointed directors struggle to hit the ground running upon assuming office.

### 5.3.2. Information

FUA's campus features notice boards and digital screens that are strategically placed to disseminate information. Unlike the other two universities in the case studies, FUA, possibly due to its age and size, hosts its strategic plan, bulletins, and annual reports on its website. The website, regarded as accessible by visually impaired students, serves as a comprehensive

platform for news and announcements. However, information at FUA takes various forms; students might learn about class changes or test schedules through informal channels like conversations at the mosque or while waiting for a bus at the motor park.

The university employs a diverse range of communication channels, including WhatsApp groups for both students and staff, where notices and broadcasts are shared. Lectures, schedule changes, and other important updates are often communicated through WhatsApp groups, with class representatives playing a crucial role. These representatives have direct access to lecturers and level advisers, streamlining communication about classes and assessments. Faculty notice boards are regularly updated with memos by clerical staff, but the dissemination of information is further democratised as class representatives or volunteers capture and post pictures of notices on group chats. This approach enhances accessibility, especially for students residing off-campus or facing mobility challenges.

The university bulletin, published weekly by the Directorate for Information, is primarily for staff and statutory offices, including the student union secretariat. It is also available online on the university's website. The Directorate for Information also manages the university's radio station, broadcasting "university stories and successes." The public relations officer of the student union operates a blog for press releases, temporarily bridging the informational gap between the university leadership and the student community. In the event of an incident on campus, the student union communicates awareness, updates students on actions taken, and assures them of ongoing efforts to address the situation. This approach to information management serves as a long-standing strategy to prevent potential agitation and unrest on campus.

### 5.3.3. Social Interaction

FUA offers diverse avenues for socialisation, often influenced by factors such as religion, ethnicity, alumni ties, or political affiliations, though these boundaries are occasionally blurred. Religious worship serves as a significant bonding element, with a chapel for Christian gatherings on Sundays and occasional weekday evenings, while Muslims also gather in vibrant attire for Friday prayers at the central mosque, creating a picturesque migratory scene.

Another focal point for social interaction is the inaugural lecture event, where newly appointed or promoted professors summarise their work and career trajectories. Held on Thursday evenings, these lectures are well-publicised through posters and invitations, becoming particularly resonant when featuring renowned academics. The audience, comprised of family members, local communities, traditional rulers, politicians, and government officials, witnesses the lecture, often accompanied by a sign language interpreter and displayed texts on a large screen. The University Press further prints the lecture into pamphlets for attendees. The subsequent buffeted dinner session provides an opportunity for lecturers to connect with colleagues from various faculties, showcasing professional networks.

Beyond formal events, socialisation among students is ongoing and dispersed across locations like hostels, classrooms, football pitches, Wi-Fi hotspots, and games centres. While the university timetable allocates a period on Wednesdays (3 pm to 6 pm) for club and association activities, the decentralised timetabling system allows departments and lecturers to schedule classes during this time. Students are tasked with prioritising their commitments, with the Sub-dean of Students' Affairs noting that, "[…] lecturers take attendance to integrate students into the structure." This dynamic and multifaceted social environment contributes to the rich tapestry of university life at FUA.

> "There's so much freedom in the university system and any student can get carried away. Nobody wakes you up in the hostel any longer. It is the decision you must make all by yourself and nobody has to force you into the classroom. Lecturers saying, I will take attendance is just helping the student to key him to the structure. It is assumed everybody is an adult" (Sub-Dean, SAU, FUA).

In terms of social events officially endorsed by the university, the second semester, also known as the rain semester[7], is notably bustling with numerous activities such as election campaigns, picnics, get-togethers, final-year parties, hostel gatherings, and more. In contrast, the first semester, known as the harmattan semester, is traditionally associated with seriousness and adjustment, particularly for new students who have recently joined the university. These

[7] Similar to the British and American Systems, Nigeria's bipartite academic system is named after the West African seasons of Harmattan (first semester) and Rain (second semester) both running between September and June.

newcomers must demonstrate their merit to be fully integrated into the system. Lecturers will make the point that students in their first year are often treated as guests until they successfully "cross" to the next academic level.

To accomplish this transition, the Director of the Counselling Unit explains that students must achieve a specified entry-level Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) from their respective departments. If a student fails to meet the required standard by the end of the semester, they may be advised to withdraw and restart the admission process. This stringent approach is reflected in the university's policy of not providing financial aid or loans to first-year students. The Students' Affairs Unit, operating under the office of the Vice-Chancellor, organises an orientation programme to familiarise new students with the available services. Often serving as a cautionary event, the orientation programme aims to communicate the "do's and do nots" outlined in the student handbook. It serves as a reference point during disciplinary meetings, acting as a witness against any claims of ignorance by the students in question.

### 5.4. Professional Contexts

As Ball et al. (2012) and Tierney (2006) suggest, universities are shaped by the actions of its professionals and academics. In this context, I will elaborate on how tangible professional activities influence policy enactment at these universities, particularly focusing on the organisation of academic advising and the support provided by staff at the Deaf Centre. But before delving into these aspects, I would like to present some data on staff diversity and its implications for staff relations and university cultures.

According to its 2019 annual report, FUA has a staff capacity of 4,299, including 1,387 academic staff and 2,462 non-academic staff, with 32% being female. The university acknowledges in one of its annual reports, that it is making efforts to become gender-sensitive in staff recruitment, revealing a similarity with other universities regarding gender parity among academic staff. Among principal officers, female representation remains low, aligning with the broader trend where only 17% of principal officers in Nigerian universities are female (NUC, 2018). While this study's primary focus is not on the representation of female academics across the three universities, this trend contributes to the diversity discourse at FUA from a gender perspective.

### 5.4.1. Academic Advising and Disability Support Services

During the final registration as new intakes, students at FUA are assigned a department staff member known as a Level Adviser, who provides academic guidance and support throughout their university journey. This practice, known as academic or level advising, has evolved over time. Previously, cohorts of students were transferred to different lecturers as they progressed to the next level, resulting in a loss of pastoral knowledge or "work knowledge" in Institutional Ethnography terms. To address this, the current system ensures that the Level Adviser who starts the journey with a cohort at the 100-level, remains the same throughout their university education, providing continuity and support.

This academic advising system proves to be particularly practical for SWDs who need to disclose their status to receive proper accommodation. Moving files across different staff members would require students to disclose their disability and initiate a new documentation process when transitioning to another academic level. Interviews with students and staff members who have served as Level Advisers, reveal a notable aspect: out of the six Level Advisers interviewed across five departments, four were female. Although there is not enough data to determine if female advisers outnumber male advisers at FUA, where the gender profile is 32% in favour of men, the skewed representation indicates a specific trend.

The interactions with these staff members highlight the outstanding care, patience, nurturing, and approachability that go into level advising. This departmental responsibility, often undertaken by female members who are still underrepresented in the overall university fabric, involves thinking as a parent and providing guidance to students who may still be influenced by their secondary school experiences. According to a senior staff member experienced in level advising, it goes beyond being a student support service; it is also a management strategy and a means of socialising students into the university culture. The Level Adviser's role is not solely about academic guidance but extends to character moulding, contributing to the university's mission of producing graduates "worthy in character and learning."

The Sub-Dean at FUA reiterated the multifaceted nature of level advising, stating, "It entails parenting in a way, and it entails having perception management and being able to guide them in making the right decision. It's going to help you. It's going to help the student and going to

help the system." This underscores its importance as a holistic support mechanism within the university ecosystem.

Support services provided by disability officers, represent the other side of the coin in the organisation of academic support services for SWDs at FUA. The current relationship between disability support staff and the academic community, illustrates a less synergetic approach to academic support. According to the university's employment structure, disability support staff are considered non-academic or professional staff. The DDADMIN of the DSC mentioned that they had to design their own employment structure because the nature of their work differs from regular non-academic staff who adhere to standard office hours. For example, disability support staff follow students' timetable structures, which extend beyond regular working hours, finishing at 6 pm in most cases.

When examining how academic support for SWDs is organised at FUA, it was found that both academic staff involved in level advising and assigned disability support staff, are responsible for this task. This collaboration is especially crucial for students with hearing impairments who require interpreters to make sense of their interactions with the level adviser who doesn't understand sign language. Support staff report to the deputy directors and the director of the DSC, receiving their student allocations at the beginning of the session. They accompany students to classes for sign language interpretation and assist students with visual impairments during computer-based tests.

While the staff at the DSC note that there is some increase in awareness regarding academic support work, they unanimously agree that academic staff at FUA do not treat them as "important allies" in delivering the curriculum. Additionally, the DSC is currently understaffed, placing a heavier workload on support staff who are on the same salary scale as non-academic staff. Out of the nine support staff at FUA, five were interviewed, and the remaining four, two on academic and maternity leave and two casual staff, were not available during the interviews. Mr. Uthman, a support staff member with about 13 years of experience at the DSC, described my research as "echoing their echo" which underscores the obscurity of disability inclusion work at FUA and the persistent challenges they face in making the university truly inclusive.

## 5.5. Material Contexts

According to Ball et al. (p. 29), the material context in the educational context refers to the physical aspects of a school, including buildings, budgets, information technologies, and infrastructure. For students with disabilities, factors such as building layout, accessibility, and spaciousness can significantly influence the enactment of policies. In this section, I argue that material conditions, including transportation, building infrastructure, funding, and student accommodation at FUA, play a crucial role in shaping disability inclusion policies and practices.

### 5.5.1. Accommodation and Transportation Facilities

FUA considers the location of its campus both a strength and a challenge. While it allows for unrestricted development, the distance from the town centre presents challenges, particularly in the transportation of students and staff during peak periods of lectures and examinations. This issue becomes more pronounced during fuel scarcity periods, as experienced during my time at FUA's campus. The Deputy VC for Management Services at FUA acknowledged that transportation challenges are likely to persist, even though efforts have been made to collaborate with the state government to secure donations of 10 luxurious buses to facilitate the movement of approximately 75% of students living off-campus. Below is an excerpt from my field notes describing the organisation of transportation services for students at FUA:

> "The university motor park is not wheelchair accessible by my assessment, lacking directional guides or signs for disabled users. The buses are also not spacious enough to accommodate a wheelchair user. The untarmacked plane at the armpit of the motor park leads to the two main female and male hostels close to the student's affairs unit. Apart from transportation services, other services are being rendered by private vendors around the motor park, such as tech repair shops, restaurants, a laundrette, and a mini-market. All these shops are not wheelchair accessible. There are raised kerbs used for erosion control. Standing conspicuously at the purported pedestrian exit from the car park is a billboard about the dress code on campus on one side of the board. The other side of the board warns against cybercrime, theft, and drug abuse" (03/11/2021).

The landscape of FUA could be divided into four areas, as the PPU told me, the residential, academic, commercial and administrative areas.

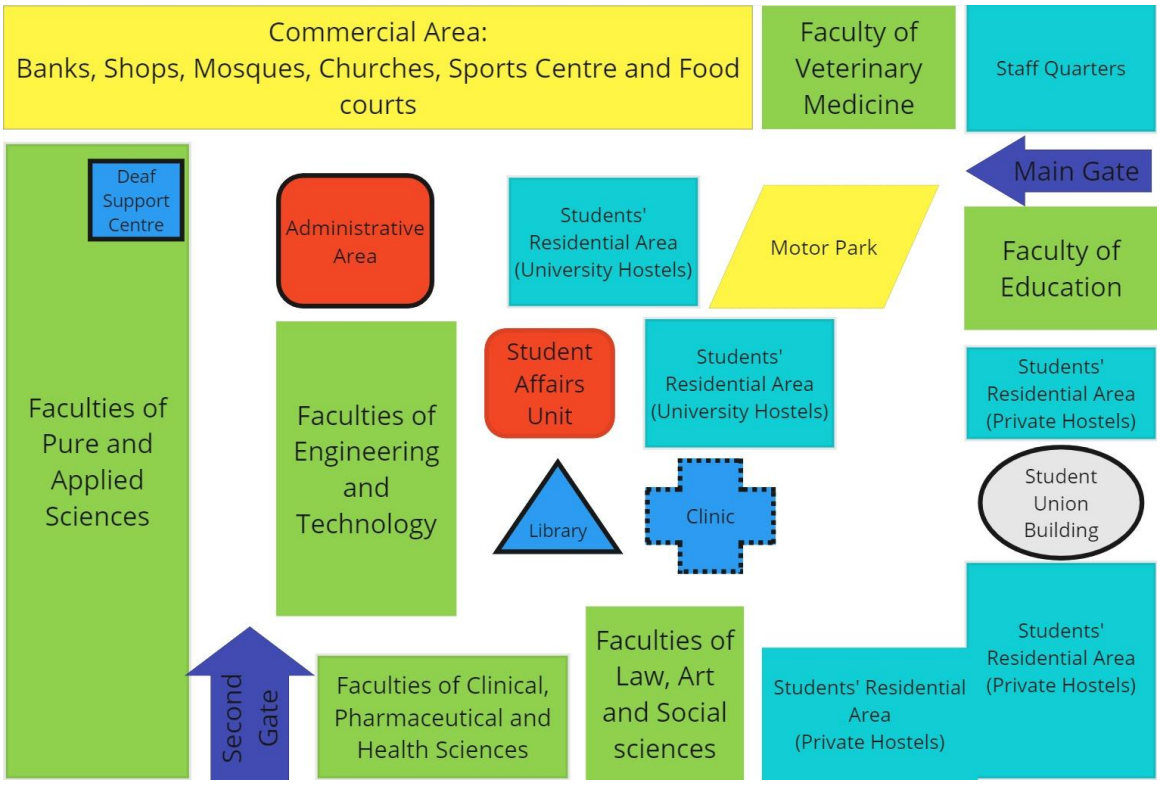



*Figure 6: FUA's Main Campus Landscape (Author's Description)*

Regarding accommodation, I spoke to the Sub-Dean of the Students Affairs Unit (SAU) in charge of student welfare on campus who has been managing university accommodation. I asked how hostel facilities on campus are organised and about the challenges faced:

> Abass: Let's talk about accommodation, how does it work?
>
> Sub-Dean: Good enough that we migrated to online application for accommodation over three years back. We have well over ten thousand students residing on campus. That is not a joke regarding reaching our mandate of twenty five percent of our student population on campus. We have the government-owned and the private owned within the campus. The private owned will soon become government-owned because it is a Public-Private Partnership arrangement that allows them to build, operate and transfer within a specified period of time. This is to help the university dream of having more students accommodated on campus. We have a time in the session when the bed spaces are advertised, students go online for balloting and once you are in good standing, pay your school charges before you can have access. It has been about four to one, one out of four students will get a space. So, it is the fastest finger game. After the balloting, the students complete their registration with

> the SAU and move into the hostels. For the private owner, it is a liberal market, you have a choice on where to stay. We have about thirty-two private hostels and about eleven university-owned hostels. Do not forget we have the main campus, the college of health sciences and the Veterinary school. In the hall of residence, we have structure, we have facility managers, we have supervisors, we have porters, we have cleaners, we have securities and then among the students, we have the hall reps who from time to time, relates with the student affairs on the development going on within the hostel so that we can be able to address those issues on time. It has been a great synergy working together.

He went on to tell me that the accommodation problem is tied to transportation and vice-versa, as the university is working on getting more students on campus to reduce the burden on the road, and reliance on public facilities for commuting to campus. Students with Disabilities, as he told me and corroborated by other informants at FUA, do not have to ballot for hostel accommodation. The DSC compiles their names, the names of their helpers and hostel preferences and forwards them to the SAU, where the manual allocation is done. I have detailed in chapter 6 the experience of SWDs in hostel accommodation at FUA.

### 5.5.2. Accessibility Audit

When I visited the director of the Physical Planning Unit (PPU) to understand accessibility issues at FUA, he told me some of the buildings on campus are "quite" accessible. However, he mentioned that an officer can provide me with more information and assist in obtaining the data I need. He suggested that I write a letter and bring it back to the Deputy Director, an architect in the unit. I wrote and submitted the letter, meeting the Deputy Director on the third day after submission. He was pleased to meet me and shared that he is also a PhD student, working on the ergonomics of learning seats for primary schools in Nigeria. He expressed interest in the impact of the structural designs of school chairs on pupils.

During our discussion about my letter requesting an accessibility audit report of the university, he mentioned that they had not undertaken anything in that respect. However, the National Commission for People with Disabilities (NCPWD) had sent some engineers to the university to conduct an accessibility audit of a university faculty, as part of their pilot policy advocacy for implementing the National Disability Act (2018). The national commission aimed to audit the accessibility of buildings in the Faculty of Education and adjust them to be accessible, using this as a template for other university buildings. The Deputy Director retrieved the letter

sent by the Executive Secretary of the NCPWD to the Vice-Chancellor, copied to the DVC Management Service, PPU, Works Department, and the DSC.

I made a copy of the letter and returned to the DSC to discuss with the DDADMIN. He informed me that he had met the engineers, and that they are currently on campus working on some buildings and toilet facilities at the Faculty of Education. He provided me with the contact information of the site engineer, whom I met at the site where the construction of a block of accessible toilets was underway (I will call him Architect Akpu). He briefed me on the extent of their work and explained how it is challenging to amend buildings and ramps while students are in session. I clarified the purpose of my research and how it intersects with what the commission is doing regarding public universities' compliance with the provisions of the National Disability Act. He mentioned that he would need to call the team in Abuja to confirm if they can release the accessibility audit report that they conducted for FUA. I was requested to write a letter regarding my request and provide more information about my research. The audit was later released, though sadly, Architect Akpu passed away before he could complete the project.

Access to an audit already conducted by the government allowed me to focus on other essential components of my research. Most importantly, the report captures key areas of the study's material interest, including the Faculty of Education building, sports complex, and the DSC. The audit mainly focuses on the physical aspect of the buildings in the Faculty of Education at FUA, utilising criteria such: as parking lot reserved bays for PWDs; distance of the drop-off from the entrance; connecting pathways from the drop-off; size or dimensions of the entrance door in terms of usability by PWDs; existing ramps and their effectiveness and access to interior parts of the building; corridor width, floor surfaces and changes in levels as well as lighting; offices, restrooms, lecture halls, podiums, etc., accessibility signage, and usage (see appendix G for other areas of intervention). Table 10 below shows the observation of the team and their proposed intervention.

AREA OF INTERVENTION

A. FACULTY OF EDUCATION BUILDING.

| S/N | POINT | OBSERVATION(S) | PROPOSED INTERVENTION | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Drop-off | Steps with no ramp provided. | Ramp without rails to be constructed. | 1no. Ramp. |
| 2. | Entrances | Steps with no ramp provided. | Ramp without rails to be constructed. | 1no. Ramp. |
| 3. | Conveniences at the upper floor. | Not disable- friendly. | 2Nos. Toilets to be refurbished in order to make it accessible. | 2. toilets. Doors to be expanded and replaced. Appropriate fittings and reticulation replaced and refurbished. |
| 4. | Lecture hall corridors | Steps with no ramps | Ramps with rails to be provided. | 2 ramps with rails to be constructed. |

*Table 10: FUA's Faculty of Education Accessibility Audit Report*

As shown in the table above, there is a conscious awareness at FUA of the need to make its building accessible for people with disabilities; as with its overall policy for disability inclusion, there is a discontinued accessibility and an accommodation policy. For instance, the Deaf Support Centre has a ramped entrance. Still, the rest of the storey building has no internal accessibility. In organisational terms, the university door is metaphorically open for everyone, but finding your way around the university is disabling. As commented by the NCPWDs Accessibility Assessment Team, "we commend the FUA authority for its accessibility consciousness and compliance effort in some of the campus buildings. More efforts are required for a more efficient accessibility compliance" (NCPWDs, 2021).

I extended this accessibility audit to FUA's library. The university's library sits at the centre of the campus, as shown in figure 6, and is close to the clinic and students' accommodation. It operates an 8am-8pm service during the week and 24hrs service during the examination

period. It is a two-storey building with no elevator. The entrance has a ramp that ends at the corridor of the entrance, but not into the library. While the library is undergoing some modifications, the university librarian admitted in an interview that the library has not been serving the needs of people with disabilities on campus in terms of its collections and structure (I explore this further in chapter 7 through students' participation work).

A similar trend was observed at KSU as most of the faculty buildings are under construction, even though the campus enjoys a good road network serviced by minibuses from the main gate. The Faculty of Education and Admin building that I frequented had no ramps or lifts. They both have built-in stairs for the storey buildings. The Special Education department in the Faculty of Education is located on the first floor, meaning any student or staff with limited mobility cannot access the department.

## 5.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how context serves as an "active force that initiates and activates the policy processes and choices" (Ball et al. 2012 p. 21), within which three universities in Nigeria operate to enact disability inclusion. FUA, being an old and federally funded university, possesses an existing policy apparatus for the implementation of disability inclusion and has become a key policy site for the DSC pilot and the accessibility audit, both conducted by the federal government. Additionally, I have hinted at the significance of leadership contexts at FUA, particularly the tension arising from the founding rules where professionals are led by "non-professionals" at DSC, and how this conflict is perceived to impact the implementation of disability inclusion policy at FUA.

Moreover, the material contexts at FUA highlight the complexities of implementing disability inclusion when basic accessibility infrastructure is clearly lacking. With universities undergoing reconstruction and modification, the mobility of SWDs is not prioritised, and existing infrastructure is poorly designed or inaccessible. Although university leadership is conscious of enhancing mobility access, an overall examination reveals a stark discontinuity. As I will elaborate on in the next chapter, this adds another layer of challenges to the daily and nightly experiences of SWDs.

## Chapter 6. Access Work

*"Access to the university is a movement upwards—only the truly 'fit' survive this climb."*

(Jay T. Dolmage 2017, p. 44)

### 6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the journey SWDs make into higher education (HE) in Nigeria, by looking at the *access work* students do to gain access to university. It pays attention to how changing policies of (un)equal access to HE shape the experience of SWDs as they prepare, apply for and begin their programmes of study. It further explains what students do to *settle* into their programmes of study, the kind of relations they make and how these acquired relations are transformed into support systems that enable their participation in university life. I have divided this journey into three phases for analytical convenience, despite the overlaps across the phases: the pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal. I use the Listening Guide (see chapter 3) to show students' nuanced journey across categories and how they construct other people or actors they relate with.

By making a distinction between these three phases, I do not want to give the impression that their journey is linear or to reinforce the dominant thinking around transition within the higher education literature. In the prevailing paradigm of students' journey to HE, transitions are depicted as homogenous stages of induction, orientation week and the first-year experience (Gravett and Winstone, 2021, Nathan, 2006, Redpath et al., 2013, Gale and Parker, 2014). The data presented in this chapter challenges these assumptions that have informed existing institutional policies, regarding students' journeys. In so doing, it contributes to new ways of thinking about transitions. For SWDs in particular, their journey to HE is troublesome, complex and rhizomatic (Gravett, 2021). To fully understand how SWDs in Nigeria access higher education, I explore the fluidity and multiplicity of their lived realities, as well as the gaps and margins in students' narratives, without "fetishising certain timescapes" (Gravett and Winstone, 2021) or policy frames in their journey to the university. This way of examining access to HE behoves that we see "the granularity of students' experiences and that individuals' lived realities do not need to fit neatly into established linear grand narratives of

transitions" (Gravett 2019, p.1). I argue that while students preparing for higher education generally face challenges, SWDs deal with a unique palisade of oppression and discrimination, through policy or lack of it, as they access higher education.

The disjuncture between actualities and policies (Smith, 2005) presented in this chapter follows Sara Ahmed's argument that institutions are like well-worn garments. To Ahmed, attunement is a consequence of use, and a garment becomes more attuned to a body that uses it and clings less to bodies deemed non-traditional (Ahmed, 2019). It is on this premise that I also argue that admission policy and processes in Nigeria have acquired "the shape of those who tend to wear them such that it is easier to wear if you have that shape." (ibid, p.43).

As shown in figure 7, I start by mapping the journeys of three SWDs from their previous educational background to the point where they are considered admitted; how they navigate the organisation of this process is what I describe as *pre-liminal access work*. I proceed by looking at how JAMB Admission Policies for SWDs are organised, and experienced by students, as they go through the *liminal access work*. Lastly, I present students' reflections on why the dust of transition never settles, by emplacing the *post-liminal* coordinating and negotiating works of these students within the university's containment strategies.

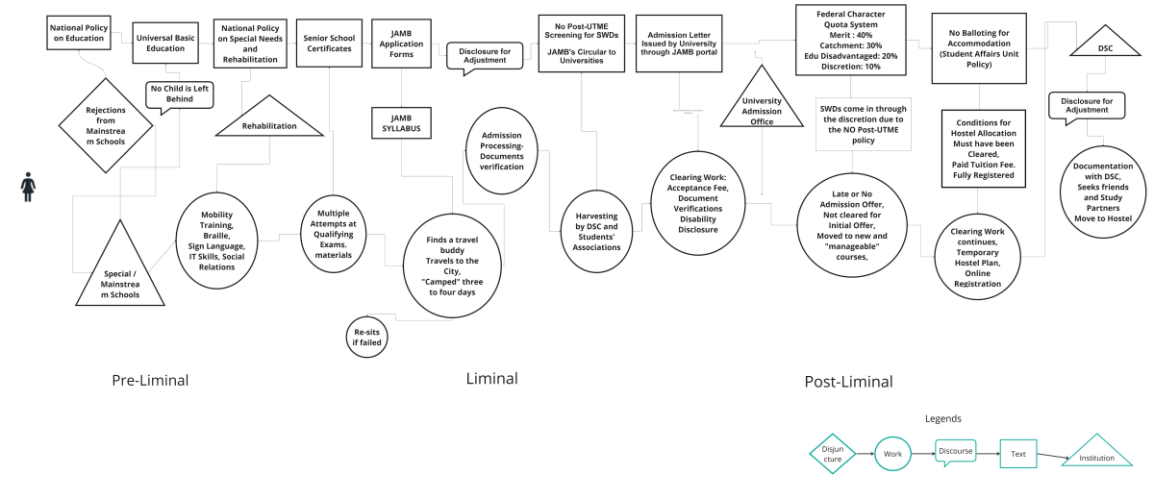



*Figure 7 A Map of the Access Work of SWDs*

This chapter concludes that while access work within the higher education landscape in Nigeria is unique as well as relational, some institutional processes and policy are being used to sort

and resort students into "stereotyped classes or groupings". These are based on socio- political biological distinctiveness, where certain bodies matter more than othered bodies (Gunter, 2023). This highlights how policies and institutional practices or logics can perpetuate violence, inequality, and injustice, often disproportionately impacting marginalised or vulnerable populations like SWDs. This "policy violence" not only impacts negatively on inclusion, but the stereotypes also become normalised, concealed and legitimised through meritocracy regimes and 'equal' opportunity populist mantras.

### 6.2. Pre-liminal Access Work

Routes to university education in Nigeria can take two dimensions, depending on previous educational qualifications. Some students, known as Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) students, come directly from secondary schools, take the entrance exam, and are admitted into their programmes. The second category of admission seekers includes those who have attended a higher education institution for 2-4 years or took A-levels and do not have to write the UTME. They are referred to as Direct Entry (DE) students. For students with disabilities, the journey is influenced by intersectional factors such as the onset and nature of impairment, provisions of the national policy on education regarding the education of children with disabilities, access to information, and parents' level of education or income and family support.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the national policy on education encourages the education of SWDs in special schools and proposes that states should pilot inclusive and integrated schools, while regular schools are advised not to discriminate against SWDs through its declaration of a "No Rejection Policy" (FRN, 2015). However, the reality of educational provisions in most states has made the implementation impossible. Students who cannot access special schools within their locations, settle for regular schools where the most supportive services are lacking (Osokoya and Junaid, 2015). For instance, the state, where the three universities in this study are located has six special schools and other integrated schools where students with visual, physical, and hearing impairments, can attend (Special Kids Info n.d).

To understand how SWDs prepare for university, I delved into their pre-university education and training. This phase elucidates why their journey to the university is troubled, due to a lack of coordinated and comprehensive policy environments that support the education and development of children with disabilities as they grow up in society. To illustrate this nuanced and complex phase of the journey, framed as the *pre-liminal access work* that SWDs do to prepare for the university, I present the cases of Asake (Female VI), Jude (Male HI), and Anthony (Male, VI). Although participants experiences are at the core of these three cases, they are composite accounts, reconstructed (Corman, 2021) to represent the journeys of many students I spoke to at FUA. While the accounts presented here are selective, like all forms of representation in research, they help describe complex work processes within an institutional setting; they highlight the messiness of policy enactment (Ball et al., 2012) while keeping the institution in view (McCoy, 2006).

The table below shows the distribution of the nature of education received and attended by the three students.

| Items | Asake (Female VI) | Jude (Male HI) | Anthony (Male, VI) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Onset of Impairment | 3 months old | 7 years old | 24 years old |
| Secondary School | Special/Integrated School | Mainstream, Special and Inclusive | Mainstream |
| Rehabilitation | Yes (Special School) | No | Yes |
| Previous Higher Education | National Diploma | No | Higher National Diploma |

*Table 11: Education Background of Asake, Jude and Anthony*

***Asake***

Asake, a visually impaired (VI) female student at FUA, faced the onset of glaucoma when she was just three months old. Born into a family with a tradition that confined new mothers and their babies indoors for the first three months, Asake's mother decided to step outside one evening, violating this customary practice. It was during this outing that someone in the compound noticed something unusual about Asake's eyes.

> "Check the baby you are carrying, what's wrong with her eyes? And mummy turned me and checked. She discovered that one of my eyes, the colour had changed already. It was this kind of whitish and one other colour not black" (Asake, Interview FUA).

They discovered that the second eye was affected a few days after this incident. Asake mentioned that from that point onward, she could still use her eyes but not clearly. She emphasised that her parents had gone to seek help for her eyes, as she said "They went to different places, different hospitals, churches until the age of 9."

When Asake mentioned her age at the beginning of the interview -"I will be 29 next month", I was happy to tell her my age too: "I am also 29", I said, thinking that this might mitigate the tension and power relations that the interview sets up. But as our conversation deepened, I felt instead an unease after realising what Asake's age at the stage of her life, meant to her. I might have made her compare her educational achievements with mine as a non-visually impaired PhD student, researching about how her life had not progressed on an equal footing because the system privileges my 'kind' of body.

Asake's parents had spent the first nine years of her life visiting hospitals to get surgeries to fix her eyes, and it was during this period that she was officially diagnosed with glaucoma. This period preconditioned the discrimination that Asake faced while attending school. Asake believed she could see, identify things and move around, but because she had been enrolled in a regular school at age 9, she was turned away, and eventually forced to stay at home isolated.

> "I was still seeing. I recognise colours, I move around. The only thing was the schools I went then, they were always sending me away. "She could not see. She could not see the board. She could not write." I only see bold writings. But once it's tiny. I won't be able to identify anything. So once I get to school with my siblings, they will just send me back that I'm disturbing them, that I should go" (Interview with Asake, VI FUA).

This rejection by the regular school provoked the parents to seek help for their daughter's education. Asake recalled that her father met a "blind man" in 2004 who introduced them to a special school in a nearby state where she "started primary one at the age of 10." While in the special residential school, a boy accidentally hit one of her eyes; the eye bled and her vision became worse. Asake said she called her parents and told them, but they could not do anything about it: "nothing happened. They never took it seriously. They never thought we could do anything about it." She continued with what she called her "normal routine" where she could still see and use her eyes. But when she went home for a break, she narrated how everything changed and her vision became "whitish" and she had lost the little pride in her eyes. "I would cry my days away wondering how I would adjust to the new normal of total blindness", she told me.

> "I went home on a break that fateful Sunday. I slept outside, you know. Being a kid, I was playing outside. Then I slept on the chair outside. So, when I woke up, I started opening my eyes I discovered I could no longer see, it was whitish. I was only seeing white, and I looked at the sky. It was whitish. I just started crying and called my mum, and she got back. We started praying and crying, crying and praying. I slept it off. The next day, black or yellow and everything, I could not see again" (Asake, Interview at FUA).

Asake attributed her ability to "move on" or what Sophia in her own account described as "snapping out", to the orientation given to them at the special school and rehabilitation services. The school helped her to get along by offering counselling on "how to move on, but most especially how to do things independently." She completed primary school in 2009 after being taught "braille writing, typewriting and other stuff." Activities at special schools, like other institutionalised living, are tailored towards making people with disabilities able to live and pursue an independent life in the future. But Asake felt the period had taken a huge part of her life, especially given that her friends in the same age cluster, were already in Senior School and some were writing the West African Examination Council (WAEC)[8] exam while she was still in year five in primary school.

Out of shame and frustration, she mooted the idea of dropping out and taking instead a common entrance exam as a lone candidate, outside the school arrangements. She said, "I told

[8] After completing secondary school, students are expected to sit for the senior school certificate exams conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) or the National Examination Council (NECO).

my dad. I can no longer continue this, so my age mates already finished primary school. Why will I still be in primary school?" She resumed secondary school in the city where she had her primary education, but the secondary school is a mainstream school that integrates students with disabilities. Asake's survival, in an educational setting where special educational needs are not primarily provided, is determined by how well she has been rehabilitated in her previous education and the nature of support available in the new school. As shown below, her participation in her new school was buffered by a sighted seatmate who would dictate notes to her after the class so she could have materials with which to write exams. This responsibility-shifting (Craske, 2020) is seen as peer-to-peer support, where students are expected to do the work of teaching assistants or support staff. It thus explains the policy assumption that when already stigmatised students fail or do not get along well enough in mainstream schools, it is due to their inability as students to form meaningful relationships with their non-disabled counterparts.

> "Then I resumed JS [junior school] one. I coped with everything, lectures and going to class. I was not the only person with visual impairment. I met with other counterparts, and we were always copying and writing notes. We get, like, I have a seatmate that dictates the notes to me. Once she's done writing, she would dictate to me. Then I'll copy my note. I read for the test and exams. So, once it's test time or exam I go to class with my typewriter. Then the reader reads the questions, I type, and I submit. That was how I continued to JS three. I sat for the JS three exam, and I made my results, I had seven credits. Then I crossed to SS1. Then after the secondary school I sat for WAEC normally, and then NECO."

Being done with secondary school by reaching senior school year three, is different from what she described as being "finally done", which means Asake had to obtain both WAEC and NECO results, before completing senior school and being able to proceed to higher education. Asake made many attempts to "buy back" the time she had lost to her impairment: a year before finishing secondary school, she tried to sit for an external exam, which she failed. So, she then sat for WAEC and obtained four credits instead of five, then "sat for NECO the same year in 2015 and obtained all the credits needed to pursue post-secondary education.

Common to all participants in this study, is the importance of an educated or informed relative or neighbour; their intervention was a huge turning point for most SWDs I interacted with. As soon as a student expressed the desire to go to university, parents would invariably react with anxiety: due to lack of information, they worried about how their child would cope. This

is consistent with the literature on hot, cold and warm knowledge and how it affects students' choice and decision to go to university (Slack et al., 2014, Ball and Vincent, 1998). In their study, Slack et al. (2014) also found that sources of information are not always equal in terms of depth of knowledge and applicability to particular students. In addition, students from different backgrounds may also have access to different sources, particularly as regards peers, family, friends and current or recent HE students. In Asake's case, throughout her pre-liminal journey, she had to rely on 'hot' knowledge from her foster parents, who are visually impaired, had a university education and now run a special school.

Her decision to go to the university was contested; this is not unusual and places SWDs in the position of having to prove not only to the institution, but to parents and relatives, that they deserve the chance to go to higher education. This precarious relationship with the university means that Asake had to fight her way through this journey, from learning how to use a computer to enrolling for a diploma course at a university, and further pursuing her degree through direct entry at FUA. For instance, while Asake was waiting for her results to be released so that she could enrol for her UTME exam, she thought about going for computer training.

> "[I] just decided, okay let me go for a computer training. Though I do not have laptop, I do not have anything. No Android phone. Let me just go. I know that people go for this. I told my parents, they're like how will you cope? How will you do this? They disagreed and said I should not go. I just reported my parents to my foster parents. See, I want to do this, and they do not want me to do it. So, the woman came and she was like, what's wrong with you? This girl is no longer a kid. Why are you depriving her of her right? is it because she cannot see?".

Poverty is another factor that shapes the journey of SWDs to university. After Asake completed a full-time two-year diploma course, she was looking to enrol in a distance learning course at a degree-awarding federal university. Her parents had suggested she studied part-time so she could work alongside study to support herself and the family. The notion of helping her to become financially independent, is one of the reasons why Asake seemed to be racing against the time she had lost, even though she could not accept the full-time place offered to her due to lack of money to pay the admission fee.

> "I was offered admission, so I told my dad. They were happy but guess what, as God will have it. There was no money to pay, even just acceptance fee of 30,000. They

> struggled, they were looking for money to pay. Before you know it, the deadline had passed." (Asake, Interview FUA)

She then changed her plan and started what she described as "a new money-guzzling admission process". This time, it was going to be at FUA where she would enter through JAMB's direct entry and start her degree at the 200 level. She managed the application process herself, keeping the more frustrating details of the process away from her father, because she did not want to be discouraged. She could do this only because she was working as a support staff at a special school owned by the people she described as her foster parents. While going to university to study on a full-time programme was a concern for Asake's parents, the location of the university of choice was another significant tension for them: she had had all her education in the same state and indeed, saw university education as an opportunity to "move to other places."

> "I said to my dad that I am that I'm processing FUA. He said, you always pass your boundary, who do you have in Arewa? My dad was discouraging me, saying that the place was too far, and he didn't want me to go to that kind of place. So he was waiting…when my admission letter was out, I printed it and I gave it to him. He was dancing. He said do not worry. You will go to school. Anyhow, I'm proud of you. You will go to school. I said okay…, but if I did not process this if I did not do this, you wouldn't be proud of me. He said yes, that's what makes you a strong girl. So that was how they supported me with the little they have. I also sourced funds from friends and family in other ways. That was how I gained admission to FUA" (Asake, Interview at FUA).

### *Jude*

Jude, in his mid-20s, with a contrasting socio-economic background to Asake , had his own encounters with mainstream rejections. Indeed, this had stimulated his interest in studying a highly professional course at FUA**.** His case illustrates how the nature of impairment and level of freedom or lack of it, determine the choice of university and the course of study. It also highlights that while SWDs face oppression in their unique ways, their interest in advocacy about their identity also shapes the kind of opportunities available to them, in a society that is built system[at]ically to exclude and segregate students with disabilities.

Jude told me that as a result of his deafness, he had attended a total of four schools and fallen behind. He became deaf when he was in class six in a regular school. He managed to finish primary six and get his first school-leaving certificate. He then proceeded to a Deaf school,

where he was made to repeat his primary education. He started from class four but skipped five and moved to class six. He was admitted to class four in this special school to spend enough time at the special school learning sign language. As he would depend on sign language to communicate going forward, it was important to repeat classes to undergo some sort of rehabilitation, even though the word "rehabilitation" is not commonly used within the Deaf community, as they view sign language as being like every other language that people acquire to be part of the society.

Jude took the Junior School Certificate Examination in the same special school before moving to the Federal Capital Territory for his senior secondary education at a "mainstream school with a small population of deaf students" (Jude). Jude was selected for the Youth Exchange Programme in the US, where he completed the second year of senior school. However, when he returned to Nigeria, he was asked to repeat the second year.

> "I decided to forget the school and register at a private hearing school in (name of state) for my SS3. I was the only deaf student. With no accommodation, I coped just fine. I wrote WAEC/NECO the same year and passed both."

He made two attempts to gain admission to FUA in 2016 and 2017 but was only admitted on the second attempt and was allocated a place on his chosen course. Jude told me about his interest in his course and how this had developed as a result of his parents' level of education and his trip to the US, which made him see his programme not only as a means for social mobility but also as a course for "advocacy and social justice" (Jude). His decision to study at FUA was partly because the university has supportive services for the deaf and partly as a result of his desire to study in a new place, having spent all his schooling, bar the one year in the US, in his home state.

> "I grew up reading newspapers my dad brought home. I started developing an interest in government from a young age. I knew I wanted to be in the arts, not science but was not exactly sure what to study in university. Fast forward to 2015, I attended an orientation for SWDs while I was an exchange student in the US. There I learned about ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act], how PWDs have advanced their rights through law and advocacy and why it's important to have (name of profession) with disabilities, advocating for the right of PWDS. That's how my interest in (name of programme) began to solidify."

***Anthony***

I now turn to examine Anthony's access work. He completed a National Diploma from a polytechnic institute in the city of Arewa. Then, he went for mandatory industrial training with a company in Lagos, where he worked as a water management engineer. As an intern, he said he worked "diligently and was retained as a full member of staff of the company." But in his role as an engineer, he narrated how he lost his eyes to an industrial chemical hazard due to a delay in first aid treatment.

> "We used to have three shifts, morning, afternoon and night, but I was on an afternoon shift this particular day. I had to close by nine pm. At around eight thirty pm, I was writing my final report. That was when the man who would take over from me entered the engine room. He noticed the pipe transferring chemicals between the tanks had fallen out. As I was on duty, he called my attention to it as I went to fix the pipe. I had to put on my PPE. The rule is that after fixing it, you must observe that it's not leaking again. So I fixed the pipe and after my observation, I removed my PPE to pick up the tool and clean the floor. The pipe finally fell out again and the chemical splashed into my eyes. As I tried to approach the water basin, I slipped and fell."

After this incident, he underwent a number of surgical procedures to fix his eyes, but none of them worked. While trying to deal with this reality, he was also involved in a number of legal battles with the company, as they were trying to dismiss him without any compensation after losing his sight. He said, "I just had to resign. Normally, I should have been compensated. That was not coming. I took legal action, and it was settled in court." I asked Anthony about his decision to pursue a degree at FUA. With a remarkable degree of dispassion, he talked about how he had to come to terms with the fact that, as a visually impaired person, he could no longer function as an engineer. It was during this period that his life took a very different direction.

> "Being a person with an engineering background, it was difficult for the company to retain me because they felt that being visually impaired meant I can't function as an engineer. That's why I had to come back here to pursue a course where I can be relevant and be productive." (Anthony, Interview at FUA)

The main focus in this chapter is the work that Anthony did once he had decided to embark upon a new educational journey, as someone who already had a diploma certificate and a career as a sighted person. In discussing his desire to be "productive", it was clear that this was tethered to what he hopes to be able to do in the future as a man who would like "to marry and take care of his family." His resolve to carry on this 'breadwinning work' forced him to

take action in order to regain control of his life. However, making this decision was very tough: he recounted how, for a period of time, he had suicide ideation and had even attempted suicide. He shared with me the emotional work he had to do in coming to terms with the fact that it was necessary to move on; obtaining another degree was a second chance at life for him.

> "Initially, it wasn't easy for me because I thought, what else can I do with my life, I thought it was over. Because I thought without my sight, I can't do anything. I was always indoors most times, people will go out, I will be at home. I cried all day. At a point, I tried committing suicide, but failed. I do not know why. Everything was just strange to me. I felt I was the only one in the world. I couldn't eat. I hated everything and everybody. One day, I went to a programme in church and heard a message about a man of God named the late prophet Obadare, who was also a blind man. But he was a man of God and worked very hard. His story revived me. If a blind man can achieve that much in life, I can too. I began to work on myself, and with the help of family and friends, I overcame those periods. I decided to return to school and pursue my degree instead of sitting at home." (Anthony, FUA)

There is a general disposition among support service professionals at FUA and elsewhere, that rehabilitation or institutionalisation prepares SWDs with the skills that they need to function independently. This tendency harks back to the containment of disability through institutional living (Johnson, 2016). Certainly, after the onset of impairment, there is a period of rehabilitation, which Hassan, Sophia, Anthony and other visually impaired students I interacted with at FUA, had to undergo before coming to the university. When I asked them to tell me about their journeys from home to school, they told me it wasn't as straightforward as I had assumed. Before coming to FUA, they had to go to special centres for rehabilitation. But finding out about this was often by chance. Hassan, for instance, shared how he learned that he could still go back to school through the radio:

> "I was listening to a radio station one day in 2015 after losing sight. I do listen to radio very well. I got the information from the radio, that I could still go back to school. But you have to go for rehabilitation. So, I went for rehabilitation in a blind school in Lagos. The vocational training centre for the blind. I started in 2016" (Hassan, VI, FUA).

Anthony described this rehabilitation as "a kind of process that helps victims of accidents and any kind of disabilities or relevant occurrence to balance and adjust to life based on their condition" (Anthony). For him, it was not like his regular education before he became visually impaired: he was shocked about the *cognitive shedding* he had to go through. Unfortunately,

Nigeria lacks standard rehabilitation centres for those who have developed impairment later in life. This is because the policy for people with special needs puts rehabilitation services under the control of most special schools (FGN, 2013). That is why Anthony enrolled at a special school for children. At first, he felt infantilised by this provision but later realised that his interaction with children with visual impairments at the school was like an "initiation" into the blind community and a consolidation of his acceptance of his new self as a visually impaired person. He told me:

> "There is a primary school section there, and during the break, the students from the primary school section come to check on me. They said I was so friendly that they would come to touch me. Initially, I wasn't happy, but I later became used to them. They were the ones who taught me the braille. They were very good with it. Some of them were born blind, and that's what they learned to write and read. I could understand the whole thing, and within six months, I completed the programme instead of spending two years. I spent almost a year."

At the special school, it was also necessary for him to re-learn mobility. He was taught how to walk independently with the use of a guide cane, how to read and write in braille format, and how to do simple arithmetic with the use of an abacus. What Anthony described as the major highlight for him is what he called "social relations", in other words, how to relate with people as a visually impaired person. The burden of "relating very well" is further complicated by how the practices of inclusion in the university and elsewhere are organised around being able to build rapport.

A case in point is evident in my interaction with the Director of Counselling about the unit's work concerning SWDs on campus. The director told me about a first year visually impaired student who had issues forming relationships: it was about a week before the exams, and Glory reportedly cried in her hostel as she had not attended any lectures since the start of the semester and the exam period was a week ahead. The director said,

> "She was horrified and cried; her friends in the hostel brought her to me. I asked her, what is your problem? She said she had not been going to class because no one could take her around. She had been isolating herself. She had not been making friends in the school. She is blind and she is not ready to mingle."

Glory was "horrified" because as a first-year student who resumed late without any existing relationship or immediate supports from DSC**.** The director took Glory to the DSC to report

the situation, and they also attested to her lack of ability to form 'meaningful' relations. As I will illustrate in the next section, the better one is at making friends, the easier the process of settling on campus. As a visually impaired student on campus, the need for helpers continues throughout their university journey, and the ability to make friends, therefore, continues to shape their identity and experience.

### 6.3. The Liminal Work: JAMB's Admission Policies for Students with Disabilities

Sophia's account of requesting special consideration as a SWD, is an excellent starting point in understanding the range of policy technologies that the government has pushed forward to advance the access and participation of SWDs in higher education:

> "I was to do a course in economics with calculations, and there is a memorandum from JAMB that states that I should have a waiver for my calculation courses because I can't do it. It was more like graphs, curves, and national income. However, the DSC did not seek accommodation for me. I had to find a way to get the memorandum myself. I wrote to my HOD, my HOD wrote a letter from the department to the department of economics. Meanwhile, after my department sent it, I do not know, because it came late, the department of economics rejected it. They rejected it. I just had to write my exam like that and let me assure you, my economics was terrible because the result is out. It's terrible" (Sophia, Interview at FUA).

After my interview with Sophia, I decided to 'follow' this memorandum by soliciting a copy from Sophia, who took photos of the texts and sent them to me via WhatsApp. It was the first time I would see the document, even though I had seen some of the provisions of the texts being reported by the JAMB, through its weekly news bulletins on the activities of the board and its administration of the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination.

Before JAMB issued this memorandum to all universities in Nigeria, its statutory duty was to conduct a unified tertiary matriculation examination for students seeking admission to tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This mandate, given by the 1979 Act, created the board that appoints the examiners, moderators, and other persons conducting these examinations. Until recently, this was the main focus of JAMB. However, recent changes in the higher education system have seen JAMB shaping the policy trajectory not only of the admission of students but also, their journey throughout their education. JAMB has now been tasked with ensuring that higher

education institutions only admit students through JAMB and should only graduate those who have been admitted through its platform to avoid what it calls "under-desk" admissions. This post-admission function has been viewed as "overbearing" by universities that believe that, as a governmental apparatus, JAMB might interfere with their institutional autonomy. A significant shift in the operation of JAMB is the transition from pen-and-paper examinations to computer-based tests, which seems to have improved the capacity and process of the examination that is only valid for a year as students have to repeat the test if they cannot gain entry into universities within the examination year. Since the inception of the computer-based test, JAMB now offers mock tests for students who might be anxious or wish to test their knowledge before the examination. A student sitting for JAMB will use the information on the brochure to decide on the UTME subjects that align with their proposed course of study and will take 180 multiple-choice questions to test their knowledge of concepts and principles of the secondary school curriculum.

For students with disabilities, these changes meant little, especially those with visual impairment who were traditionally excluded during the Pen and Paper regime. Then, in 2017, the Registrar of JAMB inaugurated the "JAMB Equal Opportunity Group" (JEOG). The admission process being proposed for SWDs piqued the interest of the public, with many news outlets reporting on the initiative as a first in the whole of Africa. The JEOG, a delegated responsibility of the government led by a former executive secretary of the NUC, comprises about 43 senior academics drawn from parastatals of the Federal Ministry of Education, former Vice-Chancellors, a former minister and experts in special education and other relevant stakeholders from civil society organisations such as the Presidents of the Nigeria Association of the Blind, National President, Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities, The Albino Foundation, Nigeria National Association of Deaf and The Anglo-Nigeria Welfare Association for the Blind (JAMB, 2021). While "blind candidates" were the main focus of this initiative, due to how they had been largely denied access to tertiary education in Nigeria, JEOG reported that it had been able to process over 2000 candidates with disabilities, including the blind, albinos with sight challenges, and candidates with autism and Down syndrome, through the administration of the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME).

> "Actually, I sat for three UTMEs. For the first UTME I wrote, I couldn't participate in the post-UTME because of the late information. I got the news when the form had closed. I went to another school for post-UTME, but unfortunately, I couldn't go because of finances. So, I then skipped 2016, did another one in 2017. Participated in the post-UTME. My post-UTME in 2017 was poor, so poor. I had 40%. In 2018, I sat for another UTME, and my UTME was okay, it was better than the previous ones. For post-UTME, it was waived for "us" the visually impaired. That was when a memo was passed from Professor Ishaq Oloyede that the physically challenged should not sit for post-UTME again in all federal universities. So, since then, we have stopped sitting for post-UTME. Our JAMB score will determine our admission; my JAMB score was okay. I had 218. Which deprived me of being a mass communicator" (Maggy, Interview, FUA).

Not all these students were admitted to their institutions of choice; indeed, some failed to gain admission at all. At the same time, admission rates for SWDs are not dissimilar to general admission rates for Nigerian HE: students may have to sit the UTME three or four times before finally getting a place. A report provided by the Chair of the JEOG contains the 2019-2021 admission rates for students who disclosed their disabilities. The reports state that these percentages are "unprecedented" for this category of students:

> "In 2019, of the 390 candidates, a total of 175 (44.8%) were given admission. "In 2020, 89 of the 351 blind candidates (25%) that sat for the UTME, were given admission. In 2021, a total of 110 blind candidates were given admission out of the 332 that sat for the UTME. This 33 per cent admission of blind candidates to higher education in an annual cohort is unprecedented in the African higher education system"(JAMB, 2021).

Students with visual impairments take the same test items as their counterparts. Sophia and some other students described the process of taking the test as "dated, disabling and defeating" the essence of the JEOG, as questions are "read aloud" by professors and lecturers at the examination centres. In the report cited above, the chair of the JEOG remarked that,

> "The mode of examination administration is blended- use of PCs and use of the traditional Braille slate and stylus/typewriters in writing answers to questions that a subject expert reads out" (JAMB, 2021).

To justify this practice, the Chair of the JEOG states that the reading-aloud method is in accordance with the current state of higher education provision for people who are blind. As I have explained in this thesis, this practice is one that students with visual impairment find limiting and discriminatory. The integration of ICT in the general administration of the exam,

has improved significantly since 2015, as JAMB now organises what it calls e-UTME. However, the test procedure for SWDs has moved from "using scribers to shade multiple choice questions, to the deployment of computer screen readers, to the current practice, where professors now read the questions aloud for the student while they select answers using either typewriter, computer or braille materials.

This extracted "they" poem captures how Sophia received the conduct of the examination:

*They had braille display system*
*they used for JAMB in the past*
*they also got their results like others*
*I felt they should have just trained people*
*on how to use the system.*

*they had to*
*they had to read aloud the passage twice*
*they were reading aloud*
*They had professors from English*
*For every subject, you are doing .*

*if others without disabilities*
*can write their JAMB in one day,*
*Why can't we?*
*I get they're trying to do something*
*they're not doing it the right way .*

*(I poem, Sophia Interview, FUA)*

Sophia's critique of the system differs from other VI students, who spoke of the process as a memorable and generous scheme, perhaps illustrating what Mbembe described as the "conviviality of oppressive power". Mbembe (2001) considers not only how the coloniality of power lays claim to the Being of its subjects through coercion and violence but how that discursive power compels its subjects to rearticulate that power, to confer grandeur on that power, and to do this through the conviviality of that power. Both Anthony and Hassan, who had to travel from other states to the examination centre in 2017, spoke of the process as a "wonderful experience", as the JEOG gave them a special reception. The treatment they

received and the days it took to write the exam, diffused the stress and anxiety, as Anthony shared with me:

> Abass: Where did you write your JAMB?
>
> Anthony: I wrote my JAMB in Lagos state because all the visually impaired from the Southwest and North Central went to Lagos State University of Lagos.
>
> Abass: Can you tell me about your experience at the University of Lagos when you sat for JAMB?
>
> Anthony: It was a wonderful experience, I know we were six that left Arewa for Lagos, and before we travelled, they told us we could all come with our helpers, I went with my helper. We gathered in the same place, and we were able to make new friends. I was happy to meet with other visually impaired students from other states. The first day we got there, we were treated very well and on the second day we started the exam. We were all assembled in the hall, those who can write with braille were asked to write in braille, and those with typewriters and computers were allowed. I used my Stylus and Marburg. It was a wonderful experience. I made new friends, we were lodged in wonderful facilities, and the whole thing lasted for three days. And before departure, we were given transport fare.

Anthony had the opportunity to network and meet visually impaired persons from other parts of the country. Apart from being able to travel alongside his mobility buddy, it enabled him to imagine a new future through higher education. The flexibility of the writing materials used for the examinations shows that the secondary education or writing skills that VI students will have acquired across the country are somewhat different. Some have been trained to read and write in braille all their life, others are exposed to typewriters or computers or both. As I will later show, these writing and reading skills become critical in determining the pace at which SWDs are able to settle into their new life as university students.

Hassan also shared an ambivalent account of sitting the exam. He had travelled from where he was undergoing rehabilitation to take the UTME, his first attempt at a national examination since losing his sight. Despite concerns about which writing material to use and having to travel to the centre with his typewriter, Marburg and a stylus, the experience had been positive and an indication of what the next part of the journey would look like.

> Abass: Tell me about how you wrote UTME.

> Hassan: Honestly, it is an experience I always like to share with people. Writing JAMB, I was wondering how it would be. Because that will be my first external exam as a blind person. Though, I know how to use my typewriter very well. The option of a laptop is not there. We were given the choice of a typewriter or braille. I took the two with me to the centre. I thought I'll be switching between the two. We did our exam separately from the other students…We were taken care of as they provided our feeding and everything. They gave us money to travel back home.

Sitting the exam three years after Hassan and Anthony, Sophia felt that there was no need to be "camped" there for three days, because all she was doing was sitting an entrance examination. Indeed, Sophia considered the arrangements made for SWDs, a "waste of time and resources". Her argument is that the resources used to lodge and host candidates across the country, could be used to train SWDs on how to use computer systems. This would enable them to write their examination on their own and in a single day, like every other person writing the UTME.

> "Then the camping, like why am I sleeping over? Because I'm writing JAMB, if others without disabilities can write their JAMB in one day, why not just equip me to write mine too in one day? and go back to my house and continue my daily activities. You do not have to camp me because I'm writing an exam."

From these interactions, it can be inferred that students come to know their lives as objects of institutional attention: there is an agenda for reform or 'to do good', as Sophia puts it; but something is amiss in how it is being done. While regular candidates enjoy one of the most sophisticated assessment systems, mostly in their preferred location, 'irregular' students like visually impaired students, are made to commute miles and distances, leaving behind their support system to "camp out" for three days in order to write the examination. This treatment compounds the impression that SWDs cannot function normally, leads to Othering, and is shaped by the segregative policy structure of their education.

JEOG can be seen as illustrating the hegemonic tendency of the 'experts' draped in the seemingly innocuous institutional relations of 'doing good': JEOG is an ambitious policy initiative whereby the organisation and administration of the UTME of this category of students has been entrusted to professors and stakeholders who are believed to have a pre-eminent knowledge of the best way to conduct the test. Some students, meanwhile, feel that the committee should invest in empowering SWDs to be able to write the exam like other

students, as exemplified by Sophia (VI FUA) who stated that "instead of putting resources into feeding and accommodation". Writing exams with the computer is after all an important skill they will need whatever university course they study. On this note, Gunter reminds us about the dangers of "claimocracy" where the language of new and aspirational change is reproduced in educational policy. Claimocratic policy initiatives like the JEOG are "used to mask the visceral reality of segregation based on eugenicist populism", legitimised through the vantage points of intelligent knowledge production of the experts(Gunter, 2023 p. 2).

I spoke to Sanni about his decision to study at the FUA: as a hearing-impaired student, the system assumes that he will be able to undertake the exams without needing any adjustment, and most of the HI students I interacted with at FUA, did not consider their UTME experience significantly different from other students. That is why JEOG has focused on blind students and others with neuro-impairments. It is an approach that Gabel and Miskovic (2014) characterise as the "minimisation of disability experience within the architectural components of disability containment as a way of lessening the impact of "other" disabilities on the pedagogical status quo" (p. 1156). Sanni became deaf due to an illness when he was young, and went to regular schools, learnt sign language and sat for JAMB in 2018. He had a good score but was unable to meet the cut-off mark for law and had to settle for a course with a lower requirement. His decision to come to FUA was because he saw the university "as an inclusive school that has a Deaf Support Centre":

> "I have always dreamt of studying in an inclusive school where priority is given to people with disabilities. FUA is one of these schools that give priority to PWDs. As for the course, I chose law but did not meet the requirement due to not registering post-UTME and not reaching the two hundred and forty required points in JAMB. I made two hundred and thirty something. I became interested in (name of course) in my first year because of its relationship with Law, politics, and global affairs." (Sanni, HI, FUA)

Students with disabilities who have gone to regular and special schools, usually have a precarious relationship with higher education because of the uncertainty of what support is available. Going to a university where at least some of their accommodation needs will be met is therefore always a driving factor when deciding which school or course to attend or study.

Students with hearing impairments also have unique accessibility needs for the entrance exam but are not required to stay overnight like VI students. Instead, they travel to a nearby city to

find a centre where they can take the exam. Because of unequal infrastructural development across the country, students in rural areas will most likely travel to urban centres or towns to write their exams. In Jude's case, he could not find a nearby centre to register and had to travel an hour from his hometown and sleep over at his friend's place to be able to take the exam the next day. Travelling to write the UTME is a rite of passage for almost every prospective HE candidate in Nigeria. The distance and number of candidates travelling for the exam, have reduced with a more innovative scheduling system and technology deployment. Yet, the examination process can leave some students with hearing impairment stressed when they are unable to make sense of instructions from invigilators. Jude noted the following on his experience of registering for and writing the exam:

> "The staff are helpful when they know you are deaf during the registration and exams but because they often give oral instructions, deaf candidates would really miss them. I honestly did not understand the questions that had to do with Oral English. I just guessed and moved on" (Jude, HI, FUA).

Another hearing-impaired student, Gabriel, who travelled about thirty minutes within the city to his exam centre, was looking to study electrical and electronic engineering but did not meet the cut-of-mark. Two factors shaped his experience with JAMB: lack of accessibility support during the exam and computer anxiety:

> "There was neither an interpreter nor any accessibility. I, therefore, did not hear anything from the invigilators. Only what I observed other candidates doing that I was able to copy. Like to know if the candidates have started as soon as the invigilator yelled "start". I would have to look around and copy what they are doing. I have never taken an online exam like the CBT, as you can see. I have never experienced that before. I had always taken paper tests. I wasn't well enough organised. I had to answer without thinking because I was so anxious of the entire exam" (Gabriel, HI at FUA).

Following what we know about the impact of computer anxiety on academic performance (Korobili et al., 2010, Shermis and Lombard, 1998, Abdulkareem and Lennon, 2023), Gabriel also suggests that the anxiety impacted his score on the test, even though he was able to gain admission to FUA. He affirmed that when he sat for the post-UTME, another computer-based test, he "felt differently – calm and less anxious, unlike before."

To address low marks due to computer anxiety, in 2017, the JAMB Registrar announced the introduction of an optional mock examination for candidates willing to write the exam for the

year. As he explains, it "is intended to familiarise our candidates with the CBT systems and generally forecast the challenges that may be faced ahead to proactively address them. It is just a rehearsal for us and candidates who want to experience the situation to expect during the actual examinations" (Thisdaylive, 2017). Participating in the mock examination, however, comes at a huge cost and disruption for students who must travel to the CBT centre. So ultimately, students in the urban areas are more likely to indicate interest in the mock examination than students from the periphery or rural communities.

### 6.4. Post-liminal Access Work

My interest here is to show how students settle into their studies and the work they do to achieve this. I start with students' experience of being "cleared" for their chosen courses, through the registration and institutional processes that SWDs must navigate and how these processes organise their lives and ambitions. I illustrate the kinds of relations that these students must form and establish, for them to become an "acceptable member" of a community that is structurally and socially designed for those that fit (Ahmed, 2019). The section concludes by highlighting how the struggle does not subside after the first days or weeks, or semester on campus; rather, the relations and their anchorage in these relations, shape the rest of SWDs journey of trying to fit within the university culture.

#### *Being Cleared*

I start with students' experience of receiving confirmation from the university admission office that they have been admitted to their courses of study before being handed over to their departments. Registration and payment is done chiefly on campus, after students have been 'cleared' to register. This clearance means that after a student has received and accepted an admission offer by the university through their JAMB portal, they need to log in to the university website and upload their credentials for verification and clearing. Through this verification, the department admission officer will be able to check if a certain candidate has taken the right UTME subjects or presented the requisite qualifications for the course that has been offered to the student or whether they have met the "cut-off mark" for the course. Due to the high demand for university education, the cut-off mark has been a 'weeding' tool that JAMB and universities use to determine who gets admitted to where and what course. It is the minimum score required to get admitted to a course or a department. However, there are two

types of cut-off marks: university-wide and departmental. FUA for instance has a general (school) cut off mark of 180 in the UTME, but separate departmental cut off marks of 250 for Pharmacy, 260 for Common Law, and 260 for Medicine and 180 for BSc (Ed) Biology. While some universities publish their departmental cut-off marks every year, others may not, and the more competitive the course, the higher the cut-off mark.

JAMB has distanced itself from the notion that it is a "qualifying" examination body, in that it does not necessarily determine who is qualified to be admitted (Dailytrust, 2017). Its argument is that even after passing their UTME, students will still need to pass the post-UTME exams by universities and have at least five credits in their senior school certificates. However, it is accepted that it is thus a 'ranking' or classifying examination, as it presents students with at least four options of tertiary institutions including universities, polytechnic, colleges of education and vocational schools. Moreover, it allows students to change their choice of institutions and courses based on their performance in the UTME. But under this guise of meritocracy, students who are being admitted to study highly ranked courses are usually from rich and educated families who have mostly been privately educated in expensive private schools, where it would be easy for them to make their WAEC or NECO and score high marks in JAMB and Post-UTME.

Assuming a candidate has everything, they need, the clearing process is usually a seamless online verification process in which students do not need to worry about how it is being done. However, my interest is on how and why some SWDs are systemically screened out of their courses through this process. I show how some students may not be cleared for the courses given to them through JAMB, partly because of their impairments. This process has become an institutionally sanctioned procedure where SWDs are further barred from pursuing their preferred courses of interest after straddling the institutional barriers of being admitted. Driving the process is that SWDs need to be admitted to a course "where they can cope" (DDACAD, Interview, FUA) or be properly contained. In other words, it is justified as being in the students' interest.

Because universities do not have adequate support services in place to support the educational aspirations of SWDs, students are moved to courses that the university thinks are less demanding. This is most evident in the accounts shared by Maggy, Esosa and Patrick. The

distribution of SWDs across faculties shows that 59% of SWDs at FUA are in the Faculty of Education, with 25% of them studying for a bachelor's degree in counselling education. While this statistical distribution tells us where SWDs study, it is also used by the university as a numeric cultural representation. This undermines the need to expend necessary resources to other departments, justifying it with the self-fulfilling argument that "we do not have students like that in Engineering", as said by one of the principal officers at FUA when I asked about their interaction with SWDs as a lecturer.

| **Faculty** | **Count of Faculty** |
|---|---|
| Education | 58.62% |
| Management Sciences | 9.20% |
| Social Sciences | 8.05% |
| Arts | 5.75% |
| Agriculture | 3.45% |
| Environmental Sciences | 2.30% |
| Physical Sciences | 2.30% |
| Pharmaceutical Sciences | 2.30% |
| Engineering and Technology | 2.30% |
| Communication & Information Sciences | 1.15% |
| Life Sciences | 1.15% |
| Law | 1.15% |
| Basic Clinical Sciences | 1.15% |
| Clinical Sciences | 1.15% |
| **Grand Total** | **100.00%** |

*Table 12: Percentage Distribution of Students with Disabilities across 'Faculty'*

Not being given clearance by the admissions office is a general registration issue that concerns all students at the university. However, SWDs who are not aware of the institutional processes that organise students' admission/registration where baseline accessibility is lacking, will either

have to rely on strangers willing to help them, or bring their parents with them for few weeks as an immediate support system. These helpers can be seen as "cultural intermediaries" (Bourdieu, 1984) who therefore contribute to shaping their journey by 'translating' institutional codes and practices. Their underlying role could be seen as facilitating the consumption of the university culture and most seemingly, to get the new consumers to understand "how things are being done" here: this is one reason why Maguire and Mathews (2010) have argued that cultural intermediaries carry out a broadly pedagogic but institutional function. I find it poignant that in the university context, it is often non-disabled students that are positioned as the cultural intermediaries for their disabled counterparts. For instance, Naomi had the support of her mother who followed her to the university and supported her for the first weeks of dealing with the "moving around."

*My mum came with me,*
*she was with me for the first weeks*
*Mum is the jovial type*
*She made a friend on my behalf.*

*I was first admitted into the Department of Psychology*
*before they moved me down*
*She he was trying to like, connect and everything.*
*But at the end of the day*
*Not very useful.*

*I was moved to another department*
*I was faced with no other choice*
*than to make new friends*
*when I got to my new department.*

*(I poem from Naomi's Interview)*

Hassan was admitted late and so arrived the week before registration closes. To his shock, he found out that his admission offer had meanwhile been withdrawn. He then met with university stakeholders for an institutional consultation, after which his admission was reinstated (Hassan). Patrick had the same issues with his admission as he wanted to study medicine, but his UTME score could not meet the cut-off mark because he scored 208, below the departmental cut-off mark for medicine which is 260. He said he knew immediately that medicine was out of reach and changed his course to zoology that has 200 as the cut-off mark. Surprisingly, he was later offered a place on a microbiology course which had a cut-off mark

of 220. Having scored 208, Patrick believes that the university should not have given him a place on that course, if they were adhering to their own admissions policy. In the excerpts below he narrates the 'institutional' work he had to do to be cleared for his current course:

> "I had to change to zoology, and even when I changed to zoology, I was not given admission. It was getting late. My mother and I came to FUA. We went to the admission office to make enquiries. We were directed to the Association of Visually Impaired Students of FUA. I got to them and from there I was able to process my admission through the DSC. So, I was given human kinetics first, which requires physical work. For me, partially blind like this, it is very hard. Because why would I be going to sports field, doing something like playing ball? Accidents can happen anytime. I have to go for a course that I know will not affect me physically, so I later I came back to school to meet with the association, and we went to the admission office. They later gave me zoology" (Patrick VI, FUA).

Esosa is a mature physically challenged student who, having weighed up her interests and capacities, had requested a place on a management course. Instead, like Patrick, she was allocated a place on the human kinetics education course. I asked her what she thought about the course and how she feels about training as a counsellor. She said:

> "I was supposed to do management and they gave me counselling." Because I couldn't take human kinetics, those people are always on the field doing training. Counselling is okay. My issue was listening. I do not like listening to people. I do not have the patience to be listening to someone's talking."

In her case, while she had not chosen human kinetics, she was also finding it difficult to cope with counselling, the area assigned to her based on assumptions about what she would be able to cope with due to her impairment. This seemingly random allocation is unsettling and troubling for SWDs and removes any sense of agency. It also adds another layer of anxiety and uncertainty to their adjustment process, as they cannot make requests for meaningful accommodation or proper planning. But who is the "they" that are making these decisions? According to the DDACAD, "they" are the university's admission committee, headed by a professor and the university's director of admission. Ironically, they are often housed far away from the university environment during the admission period, in order to minimise distraction from the university community.

Maggy had attempted the UTME three times before she was admitted on the third attempt,

as a result of JAMB releasing the memorandum regarding the waiver of post UTME for visually impaired students in 2017. In the previous two attempts, she was unable to enrol and travel for the post-UTME due to financial reasons and was not admitted because she had a low score. I asked her about her experience of being moved and what she thought about her course of study:

> Abass: You wanted to study mass communication, what was the required mark for it?
>
> Maggy: 220, I missed out with two points. At first, I felt bad, I later chose English, but I was not given. JAMB gave me history, then FUA changed it to Educational Management.
>
> Abass: How has it been so far, studying educational management?
>
> Maggy: Educational management is a good course, apart from the calculation aspect. With this course, I learned that education is better than all other courses across the universities in Nigeria. I learned that educational management is two programmes: education and management. I can decide to become a teacher or a human resource manager in any other company.

Despite having a sufficiently good JAMB score to study English or History, Maggy was placed on an educational management course. Having assessed her impairment and accommodation needs, the admission office decided to send her to the Faculty of Education where there is already a relatively large number of SWDs where staff are used to working with and supporting them. This illustrates another set of contradictions within the university's clearing process: students with visual impairment, as narrated by Sophia in this chapter, have challenges taking courses like educational management that involve maths because the teaching of any form of calculus has not evolved from the traditional means of representing numerical facts and figures.

### *Betwixt and Between: The making of transactional relations*

In the extract below, Maggy goes on to describe the impact of late resumption on settling down for her programme after she was cleared by the department. She recounts the work she had to do to catch up with missed classes and induction.

> My 100 level [Year 1] was hectic, difficult and challenging. I resumed on the 7th of January and by then, lecturers in my department had finished their

> classes. They were only doing revision, which I couldn't attend because of clearance. It was difficult, I couldn't get notes. I was dumbfounded, tired, and frustrated. I then went to my LA, and she introduced me to my class rep. I thought I won't be able to cope at first, because I could not get notes, friends and people to read to me.

Students like Maggy who are admitted after the official start of the semester, miss out on the departmental orientation programmes, classes, social activities and hostel accommodation. Because under the current memorandum, students with visual impairment do not write the post-UTME test , they are the most likely to be considered last for the admission period as the university has different batches of admission, with priority given to those considered to be on the 40% merit list and those admitted later come with the supplementary list which includes 30% for catchment area, 20% for educationally disadvantaged communities and 10% at the vice-chancellor's discretion. Admission for SWDs who don't sit for the post-UTME exam comes under the 10% discretional list.

Those admitted after the semester begins clearly miss out on crucial transitional activities. As latecomers are very likely to be SWDs, the challenges they have to navigate are compounded. As Maggy describes above, they find themselves having to be more dependent on others in their attempts to work out the system. The need to be acceptable so as to gain support from non-disabled students is not just helpful but necessary for their survival. Without this support, they cannot access the materials and course knowledge. Students who are leaving home for the first time after the onset of their impairment, will be doing so knowing that their parents or relatives will be worrying about how they will cope. Hassan mentioned that the first day he came in: "my mum was like ehh…(sigh) How will this boy cope?". Hassan graduated successfully having relied on the friendships he made throughout his programme: "people have been assisting me" he said.

The importance of friendship emerges in other accounts. I asked Titilayo, a 100 level visually impaired student, what advice she would give to a new student coming to the university, just to get a sense of what factors were shaping her first year on campus. She started with generic advice on things that concern all students, before moving on to the value of being friendly.

> "They should make sure that their school fees are ready, because it affected some of my classmates. They lose the admission, they could not pay the school fees on time, before closure. When you come to school, make sure you read

> and get prepared for test or exams any time. For visually impaired person, *they should be friendly* and know how to talk to people. They should be tolerant because If I have not been, fight will have occurred in my hostel" (Titilayo, VI, FUA)

Those who struggle with forming or maintaining productive relations are seen as lacking in the skills that are needed to cope in a university like FUA. For Maggy, by the time she got friends, it was close to her exam periods and these friends were also living off-campus. Thus making friends is one thing, but making friends who will be willing or able to help and in the right place geographically, namely, close to in same hostel, is also important. Maggy recounted that the only friend she made in her first semester lived on campus but "was not used to VI students." This friend did not know how to support her and as a result, Maggy had been unable to read for exams, which impacted her results: she mentioned getting an F, 5Cs, 2Bs and 2Ds. While many things could have impacted Maggy's performance in her first year, she found that her results improved in 200 and 300 levels, after she had successfully trained her helper who was a course mate staying in the same hostel.

## 6.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to show what Bourdieu describes as "symbolic violence" in the organisation of unequal access to university education, for students with disabilities. Perpetuated through one-size-fits-all policies which leads to a deficit view of SWDs, these students are conditioned to see themselves as the problem in HE. I have looked at how this violence is being enacted through "eugenicist populism" (Gunter, 2023) where the assumptions that inform policies such as the JEOG are codified, labelled and structured into fit and unfit bodies. I have made visible not only the barriers to access HE in the first place but then the barriers to their allocation to their chosen course and their participation thereafter. Most importantly, I have identified the "fitting work" they are obliged to engage in as students in the university.

The arguments presented here suggest that the journey of SWDs to HE is different from their counterparts due to a lack of a coherent policy approach to support their journey to university. While making or forming relationships may be optional for other students, for students with disabilities, these relationships will determine to a great extent the degree to which they are able to access the curriculum and assessment and participate actively in university life.

## Chapter 7. Participation Work

*"As civilising modernity plods along, it creates a new model of 'cultural' citizenship…To do what is fitting is to be fit. The unfit persons fail the test of fitness for citizenship. Disabled people fail it every day, in the moralised environment where a judgement of conduct takes place."*

*(Bill Hughes, 2012 p.19)*

### 7.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the working relations that go into the enactment of disability inclusion policies at FUA. I focus on students' relations with the educational triad of the curriculum (course contents), pedagogy, and assessment and the SWDs' work in their halls of residence before they get to or go to the classroom.

I assemble their engagement with the institution into moments by looking at how students make sense of their living spaces, get ready for class, classroom experience, and their experience with the assessment system of FUA. This "bed-to-class" analysis of students with disabilities' actualities, shows that students' experience with the curriculum does not start from the school gate; there are "material consequences, the here and now of having an impairment" (Davis and Watson, 2002 p.165) that shape their interactions with the curriculum and the university. I exemplify how different kinds of participation work are coordinated and nuanced by gender, hostel accommodation, financial resources, and the nature of impairment. I use some students' experiences as foils to illustrate SWDs' work, as they traverse the quotidian actualities of enacting disability inclusion policies at a university like FUA.

### 7.2. Mental Work at the Halls of Residence

> "I walked into room D12 as Anthony asked me to sit on the uncovered mattress of the lower level of this double bunk made of steel. He is trying to extinguish the burning fire from his greasy, small, movable kerosine stove at

> the room's balcony that parallels a painted high, impregnable fence where they cook and wash plates. He had a green bowl of water on his left, using his right hand to scoop and sprinkle the face of the stove with water. He's made several attempts as he struggles to feel where the fire burns the strongest. Because he needs to feel the fire, bending down too close to the stove and inhaling smoke from the incomplete combustion of kerosene."
>
> (Fieldwork note, 23/11/2021)

Ahmed argues that if a world has not been made to accommodate you, it takes more out of you to accomplish the same tasks compared to those who are accommodated (Ahmed, 2019). It is possible to be "used up by what one needs to do to complete what might seem to be a simple task, such as entering a room, sitting at a table, or going to the toilet" (ibid, p. 64). I present students' spatial and strenuous mental work in their residence halls, as they prepare for classes. Exploring these "behind-the-scenes" stories is possible because, from the outset, this study took a particular interest in every moment of SWDs' encounters with the institution.

As students also invited me to their halls of residence, my interviews reflected the moment-by-moment journey of students by asking them to take me through their hostel accommodation, both physically and narratively. This section also highlights how some of the institutional policies at FUA are enacted by students in their residence halls and on their way to the lecture hall. Most important in these narratives is the issue of enervation from the extent of the work they do to fit in. I found that SWDs' energy and time are often "used up" by the time they get to class, due to the multiple negotiations they must navigate in order to participate in student life. This experience implicitly conveys that they somehow lack the "clean and proper body" (Kristeva, 1982) that the university was made for. I argue that SWDs confront this "ontological invalidation" daily. I do so through accounts of hostel accommodation and journeys to and from campus, as well as the work students do in these spaces.

FUA operates a semi-residential campus: only 25 % of the students live on campus; the remaining 75% find their way to and from campus every day. The 25% live either in FUA's hostel facilities or those owned by private individuals as I have explained in chapter 5. FUA's hostel accommodation policy is that SWDs do not need to "ballot" for hostel spaces but will be allocated manually through the students' affairs unit under vice-chancellor's office. Hostel

allocation on campus is not automatic; however, SWDs who want to stay on campus will pay the same amount as every other student. The DSC compiles a list of students ready to take university accommodation, together with their 'helpers'. Staff at the DSC and SAU explained to me that they have integrated support for students in their accommodation, which means that they can nominate a friend or classmate who will be given a bed space in the same hostel facilities so that they can support SWDs in and out of the hostel. This helper would not need to ballot for accommodation either. In other words, their decision to be nominated as a helper of a disabled student, earns them hassle- free hostel allocation.

My analysis of commuting to FUA campus in the next section sheds more light on why guaranteed accommodation in the university's halls of residence might be a superlative deal for volunteers at FUA. Sophia's account is useful in understanding what it means to live in a private hostel outside campus. She lives in a purpose-built student area leading up to the city centre. She describes the neighbourhood as "the centre where you can virtually go anywhere in Arewa". She did not just find this accommodation by chance: it was the result of a careful search for a location which would enable her to access most of the facilities she would need, including her church:

> "The hostel is in a very strategic location. I deliberately had to look for that kind of hostel. It wasn't easy, but I was happy I got such a thing because that is what I wanted. The way hostel is near the market, in between the school terminus, and it's just behind the church I attend." (Sophia, VI, FUA)

While Sophia succeeded in getting accommodation that in terms of location, serves her needs as a visually impaired person, the hostel itself was not built with people like her in mind. I asked about how she could make sense of the environment, as she lives on the first floor of a one-storey building. She invoked the use of time and how she has become used to or adjusted to, the house's structure, although she still bumps into things:

> "I am already used to the whole structure of my environment. It is quite easy for me to walk around without obstruction. I go to the market, I know where everything I want to get is, I just go there and get whatever I want to get".

Whenever the tap stops running or the plumbing breaks down, she fetches water from the reservoir or well and carries it up the stairs to her room. She told me that she cooks, even though cooking entails a lot of things, including going to the market, which she does by herself.

She said, "I cook, and I use gas. First of all, cooking entails a lot of things. I got to the market myself. I go to the market." She recalled a moment when she was at the market looking for items to shop for, trying to use her embodied knowledge to locate the items on her list. She then realised that the groundnut oil had been moved from its usual position and asked a co-shopper for a direction:

> "I think one incident I can't forget was when I walked up to the man and asked him for directions. He was like can't you see? Then he looked at me and went I am so sorry. He was becoming agitated about what he said. When he realised that I can't actually see, he went cold. He took me there by himself."

Sophia's most disliked activities include the mental effort needed to get ready to go to school and doing her laundry. Preparing to go to school for an 8 am class means she has to wake up as early as 5 am, so that she can get water, clean the house, and say her prayers. Often, there isn't enough time for her to make breakfast because cooking for her as a visually impaired person is very time-consuming. On doing her laundry, she said:

> "I do not like laundry. Anything that is associated with the laundry, I do not like it. Washing and ironing too. I tried to ensure that most of the clothes I have do not need ironing, first of all. When I was doing my student industrial work experience scheme, it was frustrating because I had to wake up very early and iron."

At the heart of Sophia's account, we can see a daily demand for bodily delicacy and structural refinement, advanced by what Elias describes as an "intolerance of impairment" (Elias 2000, as cited in Hughes, 2012) at the centre of a civilising modernity in which higher education has become a significant tool. The cultures of exclusion that taint disabled people's lives begin with the pronouncements of etiquettes that hide the "behind the scenes" struggle of people with disabilities. It does not matter how they get to where we are, once they can conceal the distasteful details of their everyday living to appease the "tyranny of normalcy" (Davis, 1995). According to Hughes (2012), disabled people have had to make a significant effort to establish their human worth. This effort is a struggle against the civilising process and its tendency to marginalise disability at an ontological level.

While Sophia's life in her accommodation indicates a degree of freedom and choices, Asake's experience in the university-managed hostel is shockingly illustrative of how institutional

spaces and confinement can become "slippery places of internment" (ibid, p.19) for disabled students.

Asake lives in one of the university-owned hostel facilities at FUA. She reminded me that even though, as an SWD, she has priority on the Students' Affairs list, it is not that straightforward, especially as a fresh student who must have been "cleared" (a process I examined in chapter 6) paid tuition fees and registered for the course. In cases where all of these stages are pending, those planning to stay in the hostel will need to arrange temporary accommodation off-campus, from where they commute to campus in order to complete the various textually mediated hurdles of "becoming" a FUA student (described in chapter 6). Unlike other students who must jostle for bed spaces on the university portal, in a "fastest finger game", SWDs are allocated accommodation upon request from the DSC. After allocation, they pay 28, 000 naira before moving in. Asake shared her experience of the day she finally moved into the hostel:

> "The first day in my hostel. I got in. The lady helped move my loads. So, she left. She did not stay, and I needed to go to class immediately... I never knew anybody who can I call to be of help, would they be really available to assist me? My hostel is kind of inside…you have to walk a mile before you get to the main entrance. So I just decided, OK? Why not try it out yourself, then? See how it works. So, I just moved out, so I started walking around."

Asake mentioned that because the hostel has multiple entrances, that could be confusing, even for someone with full sight, as she heard some of her sighted friends complain about how they navigated the maze of the hostel entrances. Asake, trapped in this structural labyrinth where she has been "dumped", was trying to work out how to escape so that she could attend her class. She said:

> "I just came out, and I started walking around. I went wrong. I came back again to where I started from. I counted the rooms as I was going. When I got to a point, I discovered that I've gotten to an edge where I could no longer get any entrance. I could no longer make ways. Then I start back. I turned and counted the rooms again and went back to my first start. I stood there. I was trying to calculate and I just heard people passing from a corner. I said okay, let me trace that side and see where it leads. I went. Then I discovered that I could make my way from there. Though it was not the original way. I made my way, and I started moving."

The proprioceptive work Asake describes above illustrates the beginning of the enacted participation work that has to be forged. Implicit to this work is the assumption that SWDs

will not always learn or use the "original way"; rather, they are left to work out their own way. It requires considerable agility, balance, and coordination to keep moving in an uncharted and strange terrain.

Describing his experience at the male hostel, Anthony stated "the only thing we don't do is balloting. Yeah, they've done that. We do not ballot, the student affairs unit finds a way to give us our hostel without balloting." Having been to other federal universities in Nigeria, Anthony believes that FUA's provision for SWDs or visually impaired students, in particular, is inappropriate and that balloting is, after all, a bureaucratic hurdle created by them in the first place. There are other more pressing concerns when it comes to accommodation.

> "We just submitted a list and were given hostels. But you still have to go through the same struggle. Other universities have special rooms for people with disabilities, and taking into cognisance the nature of their disability, they have special rooms for them. But there's nothing like that at FUA. Sometimes, they put you in a room of eight or six. You just have a bed and your wardrobe to yourself. Even the way the bed is positioned is not convenient. You must use the general toilets that almost fifty or a hundred students use. As a visually impaired person, in my personal experience, I have often stepped on faeces due to people using the toilet anyhow, you know, not managing the place very well. It's not easy sharing public toilets and all" (Anthony, VI, FUA).

I asked Anthony about his first day in the hostel and how he adjusted to the mental work he does in his hostel. He highlighted the need to get a support system in place, master where critical facilities are and be open to calling on people if he needs help to move around:

> "I had to get someone who took me around and I ensured that the person did not hold me. I was going with my guide cane. The person at the front, I was following him, just following his footsteps. I did that for about one or two hours. Yes, trying to navigate the necessary places that I know that I would ordinarily need to access on a daily basis, like the toilet, the bathroom, the *buttery* area, the porter corner, where there are tanks to fetch water. And then in the middle of all these places, there are gutters, gutters here and there."

Apart from the fact that life in these hostels has a semblance of penitentiary arrangements, with iron bunks, high fences, and a security porter at the entrance, it has no ramps for wheelchair accessibility. A colonial term still in use today at FUA is the term 'buttery', where students get groceries just in the hostel compound. Buttery, primarily used in the monastery, is still in use in some colleges in Cambridge, Oxford and the University of London.

Life on campus is quite different for those students whose parents can afford private hostels, built by individuals through public-private partnership arrangements, as discussed in chapter 5. At one of these private facilities, Gabriel, an HI student, lives in a hostel where four people stay in a room which has an en-suite. They get a regular electricity supply with a backup generator and a library, so he does not have to leave his hostel before he can study. Unlike in the university-owned hostel, the kitchen and bathrooms in private hostels are not communal. Like every private facility, the more they are willing to pay, the greater the comfort, privacy and less dependence on public utilities like water and common rooms. Students in private hostels can choose to have a space to themselves or share a room with just one person as long they pay more. These private hostels, however, are not well connected to access paths from the car park or main road. Anthony noted that if FUA prides itself as an inclusive university, it should take this into account in its planning and development: SWDs should be able to walk the university without hindrance:

> "As a visually impaired person, daily activities in FUA have been difficult. It's something that you have to be like 80 to 90% dependent because starting from you going for lectures. You cannot navigate the roads, no matter how good you are at mobility. No blind person can navigate FUA with his mobility cane. It's impossible because the environment is not structured, so you can position yourself and use your mobility or orientation skills."

Anthony's perspective reinforces the impression that FUA as an institution does not help SWDs to be less dependent on other people's availability to carry out their daily activities on campus. Disabled students are rendered entirely dependent on their peers' kindness and willingness to help, both inside and outside the hostel. Students in this study have had to put up with the homogenising logics of FUA "in which the embedding of ever more prescriptive norms of bodily comportment confirms disability as a social contaminant." As Hughes (2012 p. 26) argues, disabled people are "sacrificed on the grounds that they are devoid of the kind of comportment that is a pre-requisite for appropriate social participation."

What is more disturbing in this trove of inaccessibility, is how the lack of access for SWDs in hostel accommodations is still conceived as "natural, reasonable, sensible, and even seemingly justifiable" (Titchkosky, 2011) and SWDs should be grateful that they do not have to ballot for bed spaces. The following section looks at how the configuration of disability has become

individualised, and the actualities of SWDs are treated as products of a naturalised civilising experience of university education.

### 7.3. To Queue or not to Queue: How SWDs get to Class

> "In the morning, I wake up around four to four thirty. I pray sometimes, read for about one hour and prepare for school. I usually have an eight o'clock class, so by seven am, I will be at the bus stop; sometimes, I use the bike to get to the bus stop. I do not even know how I went through that first semester, it was just a miracle. Because we need to drag for the bus, they do not even care if you are physically challenged. When I get to the terminus, I used to see a long queue, so initially, I would just go and join the queue. Sometimes I would just say no, I can't. Let me just stand on this road and see if a miracle will happen. Most of the time, somebody will just come along. Just pick up some of us that are there on the road. That's how I get to school sometimes" (Esosa, PI, FUA).

My interest here is to explore further the participation work that is involved in the time-bound movement from students' bedrooms to the classroom. In the previous section, I illustrated some of the work that is required from SWDs to get ready to go to school from outside the university campus or get to class from their hostel accommodation. Here, I reiterate the appearances and disappearances of disability in this mobility work and how it shapes the overall experience of SWDs, focusing on how FUA accommodation, transportation and lecture policies frame this experience.

Smith's (1987) call to see the "everyday world as problematics" reoriented my interactions with students by starting my exploration with a simple but important question like: "Tell me about your typical day." I asked this question because it is taken for granted that a typical day for students with disabilities is not like every other people's day. It is not just about waking up at 8:50 am and getting to the lecture hall at 9 am. It involves overnight planning, arrangement of a mobility buddy and negotiation of rights and privileges as they journey to school.

When I asked Sophia about her typical day, she replied, do you mean "a day with an event or a day without an event?" This request for material delineation shows that every day with an event in the life of SWDs comes with its own challenges; the work they do to participate in

this "event" is what I refer to as the participation work, naturalised or homogenised within the assumption that every student will be in class at 9 am for a 9 am lecture. Students who cannot cope with this "school run" (Griffith and Smith, 2004)are then framed as problematic and demanding, viewed through the logic of "natural distribution of competence" rather than the social organisation of opportunity and resources (Hughes, 2012 p. 27). As Esosa states in this section's opening quote, there is no rule in FUA policy that SWDs should not have to queue or that they should be allowed on the bus with their mobility buddy. Instead, Esosa has to rely on a "miracle" pick up.

In Sophia's account, there is a sense that it is becoming integrated into the relational fabric of students' coordinated activities, such as queueing at the motor park or an examination hall's entrance. Sophia sees getting to class as a daily battle. She has two mobility buddies who help her get to school. Their unpaid and unacknowledged job is to pick her up at her hostel and guide her to the university terminus, where they take a bus to the school park and eventually help her to the class:

> "If I have eight am classes. I wake up around six am, you know, FUA, you have to struggle for everything, you have to [fight for the] buses, and some of them do not always believe I am someone with disabilities. If I approach them and tell them I am going to school. They will keep a space for me on the bus. If a new bus is coming, they will not allow anybody to enter until I enter first. The problem is, most time, I go with my friends. So, I can't leave any of them. Like I can't leave two people behind and go with one person. So, it is always a problem, so I have to queue, and we all have to queue together or fight for the bus together. That's always how it is."

While Sophia has friends and classmates who help her to the terminus and school, Olutoyin, a visually impaired student, describes how she relies on the shopkeepers on her street to find an Okada (motorcycle taxi) to get to the bus terminus. In her case, no one comes to pick her up. She lacks the luck of having what she described as "sacrificial friends". Esosa, Sophia and Olutoyin have problems with eight am lectures, not because they want to lie in, as Olutoyin gets to do on an event-free day, but due to work they must do to navigate the rush hours at FUA. Olutoyin said:

> "My day depends on the routine or school timetable. I have been enjoying my day since [the end of] my first semester exams. In the morning and afternoon, I get to sleep. And when school is in session. I have had to rush for the bus, especially when I

> have eight am classes. There is a lady I always call to help me to the terminus. She helps me. I kind of find it difficult when I have eight am classes. As at that time, shops are not open, I find it very difficult to stop [motor]bikes that will take me to the terminus. Because it's not seven am yet. I rely on people in the shops to get [motor]bike to the terminus."

Olutoyin describes an environment where seeking help is possible only within certain parameters. Olutoyin has developed a strategy that involves getting herself to the roadside and then relying on shopkeepers to wave down an Okada man who will take her to the bus terminus. However, she has to leave home at seven am when she has an eight am class. The neighbourhood support system she relies on is not in place at this time. In other words, it is the shopkeepers' daily timetable that determines whether Olutoyin gets to school late or early or gets to school at all.

I decided to observe what happens at the bus terminus to understand the rush students described in their interviews. I learned that FUA has just two buses conveying students between the city centre and the university motor park. The journey to and from the university takes about 50 minutes. In addition to these buses, there are minibuses that only take passengers to FUA. But given that 75% per cent of students reside off campus and have to get to the university through a single main entrance every morning, this is still insufficient. I witnessed the rush, the time it takes for buses to return, and, as Sophia described, "when the buses start coming, and there is no coordinator around at the terminus." It is a disturbing scene, as the rush for the bus begins. As Olutoyin remarked, "I can't be rushing for the bus because I'm not even seeing how they are rushing me." While I did not see any students seeking an exemption from joining the queue during my observation, the pressure to get to school "on time" and in the right place, coupled with the fight for a place on the bus, explains why this part of the journey is the most difficult for SWDs and why most of them opted for university accommodation, even though off campus accommodation is far better suited to their needs, compare with the university hostel.

However, even those in university campus, like Anthony, have to rely on classmates to get to their classrooms and lecture halls. Anthony commented on the inaccessibility of FUA's campus so that he could not use his orientation or mobility skills:

> "you have to wait and then try to liaise with friends that will come and pick you up probably at the front of your hostel to the lecture room, gutters everywhere. I can't count how often I have fallen into gutters to ensure I go for lectures and all."

Anthony has reached out to me several times to help him to class from his hostel. I would get dressed for an 8 am lecture just like him, go to the front of his hostel or go into his room to pick him up. Because he has attuned to the uneven landscape surrounding the hostel, he is able to walk out of the compound by himself, so he waited for me at the entrance. We would walk with his hand holding my upper arm as I explained our direction, informed him of any obstacles and even mentioned friends who might be coming his way as we walked to the lecture hall. When Anthony's regular mobility buddy is unavailable, he has to call someone close to his hostel and check if they can help:

> "Sometimes, when you want to go to your lecture room, and you do not have the regular helper available, finding someone to help you in your immediate environment is hard. You have to pick up your phone and call somebody from another hostel whom you relate with very well to come and help you to the lecture room. And if he or she is not available. You just have to forget that lecture for that day."

While not attending a lecture can be the consequence of not getting a helper to get to the class, sometimes lecturers cancel a lecture or simply do not show up. For someone who has struggled to get to the lecture hall either on time or late, going through the stress of the rush hour, and eventually discovering that the class will not take place, according to Olutoyin, is one of the most painful experiences of being a disabled student on campus. While it is understandable that lectures are moved or cancelled, based on my observations, timely communication with students is not a part of the culture at FUA. Lecturers are still hierarchically "positioned" and it seems to be their decision as to whether and when to have their lectures. I asked Anthony to describe an instance when a lecturer had cancelled:

> "So many. So many. There's a particular one I cannot forget. It happened this semester. The lecture was scheduled, and I was going to that lecture in the Lecture Theatre. I fell into one deep gutter. That gutter was very deep, it was

> not just an ordinary gutter. You know, those gutters that have been well fed. I fell into this gutter that day and had to return to the hostel to change my clothes. I was practically smelly. Coming back to the lecture hall, we heard the lecture was cancelled. Things like that get someone stressed after the stress of looking for somebody to come and pick you up. The stress of him coming from his house off-campus, he will have to come to my hostel to pick me and you get there to be told the lecture has been cancelled. It is very bad, very, very bad. I feel so bad."

This section has further illustrated the impact of the university infrastructure, transportation and culture on bodies deemed "mis-fits" in the university. Garland Thomson argues that:

> "fitting occurs when a generic body enters a generic world, a world conceptualised, designed, and built, in anticipation of bodies considered in the dominant perspective as uniform, standard, majority bodies. But on the other, misfitting emphasises particularity by focusing on the specific singularities of shape, size, and function of the person in question (Garland-Thomson, 2011 p. 595).

The fight to get on the bus, waiting by the roadside for a miracle pick-up, not joining the queue at the bus station, and requiring a seat are examples of the 'fitting' work that SWDs do due to the lack of a comprehensive support system that enables reasonable participation. For this reason, Garland-Thomson goes on to argue that "people with disabilities become misfits not just regarding social attitudes — as in unfit for service or parenthood — but also in material ways." They are perceived as outcasts when their bodies' "shape and function conflict with the shape and stuff of the built world". This exclusionary casting out and the resultant segregation in domestic spaces or sheltered institutions like university hostels comes partly from social oppression encoded in attitudes and practices but also from laws and built environment (Garland-Thomson, 2011).

This fitting work never stops.

## 7.4. Classroom Participation and the Struggle for Seats at the Front

> "In class, the lecturers allow us to sit at the front. Even if people are there already. Not only visually impaired, even the physically challenged, the HI also will sit at the front rows. So that we will be able to see what the lecturer is saying. But I remember in my first year I did record my lectures. But when the lecturer is dictating or explaining anything, most times students make noise, or the public address system is not good. The recording will not be that clear" (Hassan, VI, FUA).

> "When I was in 200 level, we did more of this balancing of equations, this whole carbohydrate chain, when I was doing food and nutrition course. I can't see whenever they do those things on the board. No matter where I sit in the class. Even when I sit just directly in front of the lecturer. I can't see anything. What I do is, I tried to pay great attention, and follow the steps in my head" (Sophia, VI FUA).

The two excerpts above illustrate the tensions that arise in enacting adjustment policies in the classroom. While some lecture halls lack ramps or projectors, students with disabilities at FUA are given special consideration during lecture, starting with the seating arrangement, using guide canes, using voice recorders and providing sign language interpreters. I observed five sessions at FUA. I followed students across disability clusters to classes to understand their interactions with the learning spaces and pedagogical contents. For this section, I present key elements of my observation and combine it with student work in negotiating classroom situations and participation. See Figure 8 below for my graphical mapping of this work. For a sample of my observation narrative, see Appendix E.

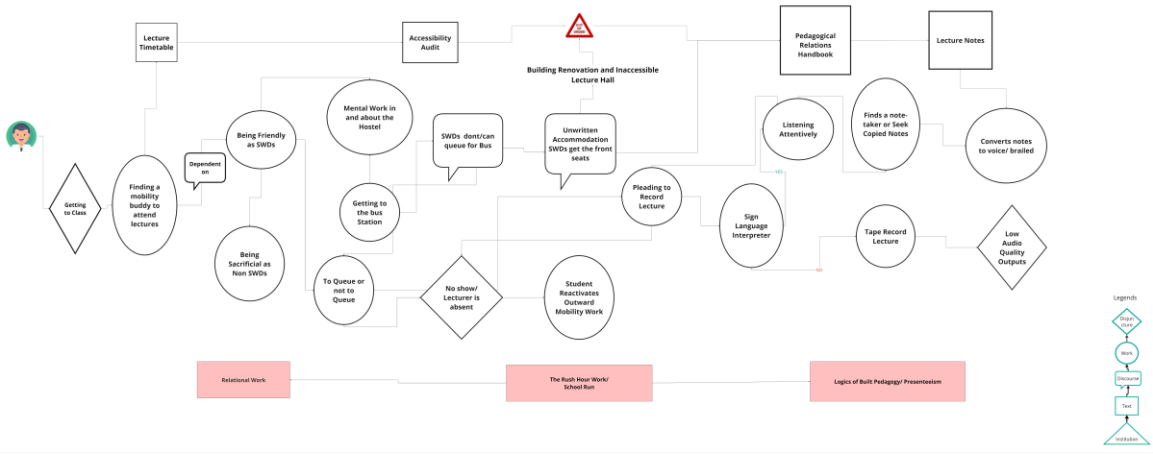



*Figure 8: A Map of Students' Participation Work*

During an observation session, I had the opportunity to accompany Anthony to the lecture hall for an 8 O'clock lecture as his mobility buddy, because his regular buddy, also a student of this class, was out of town that day. As we made our way to the lecture hall, Anthony told me that the lecturer had just informed them a day before, that he would be going on annual leave in December and wanted to complete the course content before his annual leave.[9] Henceforth, therefore, there would be lectures twice a week instead of once. As I highlighted above in the last section, lecturers at FUA have significant autonomy over their course design and delivery, which allows them to then make informal arrangements with students and change or cancel lectures. This is particularly impactful on students with disabilities, given the careful planning and arrangements that they need to do in order to get to and participate in these lectures.

Another example of how lecturers' decisions impact SWDs is seen in Esosa's account of when her lecturer had arranged an ad hoc lecture without checking that the hall was free:

> "We really had a problem of class space, first semester was worse, but it is getting better seriously this semester. For today, one of my lecturers fixed class for 8-10, the lecture could not hold because another level was using the venue. That's another challenge I faced in this school. We had to start looking for another lecture room upstairs, which I had to climb. Before we got there, the class was already full. I had to stand or wait outside" (Esosa, PI, FUA).

***Arrival and Seating Layout***

The lecture room I observed is smaller than a typical lecture theatre at FUA: it has three rows of long desks attached with benches that comfortably seat 40-50 students. I noticed that the benches are bolted to the concrete floor, rendering them immovable as they face the front where the lecturer delivers the lecture. Apart from demonstration labs where stools are used and are movable, all lecture rooms at FUA take this arrangement, predicated on students being passive participants in the classroom, as they listen to the lecturers' presentations. There appears to be an equal number of men and women and as it is a 400-level class, it has a lot of mature students, including Anthony, who returned to university after losing his sight as an engineer.

[9] FUA was running an unusual academic calendar after the closure of the University during COVID-19 and the staff union strikes in 2020. Lecturers were asked to defer their annual leaves till end of the session.

Anthony sits on the front row, near the wooden lectern, to listen to the lecturer. Behind the lectern is a whiteboard with some equations solved on it. This lecture room has no overhead projector or in-built audio aid system for teaching. Apart from the whiteboard marker and a non-functioning wall clock, nothing in the room marks it out as a 21st-century university classroom, in stark contrast with what FUA literally portrays on the outside. It is 25 minutes after 8 and the lecturer has not arrived. While waiting for the lecturer's arrival, students chat in Yoruba, Pidgin and English, discussing their final-year research projects.

At this point, I take a step back from this observational narrative to look at how students work for a seating layout that will support their learning, especially in classes where lecturers have no idea of the needs of their students. Sophia had gone to another department to "minor" (to take a course from another department) a political science course. She met the lecturer and disclosed her impairment so as to secure the lecturer's support:

> "So, I met the lecturer, just to talk him that okay, I am a visually impaired student in this class. I do not know if I could get a soft copy material and all. He said oh, you shouldn't be struggling with others, so he just felt, he would reserve three seats in the front, whether or not I come to class, he would reserve three seats for me and two of my friends bringing me to class. So that was a great accommodation for me because I could always be in the front and record the class instead of being at the back" (Sophia, VI, FUA).

Clearly, Sophia appreciated this form of accommodating her needs. But being in the front row is only one aspect. Other pedagogical work has to be done to make sense of the lecture room situations. Esosa recalled that sometimes, despite being in front, she cannot hear what the lecturer is saying and that "sometimes they are able to pass the message, sometimes they are not. You will just take it like that."

As someone partially sighted and not treated as a visually impaired person, Naomi is even more likely to get forgotten. She told me that the lecturer just teaches and writes on the board as normal. It is up to her to pay extra attention through listening. Upon returning home, she writes down what she has understood from the class. While this participation work is somewhat mechanical, where she has to play the role of a voice recorder, she does not get it all in most cases. She will then activate her relational work by seeking a friend's support, asking them to explain the concept to her:

> "No matter where I sit in the class. Even when I sit just directly in front of the lecturer. I can't see anything. What I do is I try to pay great attention and follow the steps in my head. When I return [from the class), I meet up with either of my classmates or my friend to explain to me. Or I sit down, I try to put what I heard into writing to see If I understand it and if not, I check my textbook to see how it was done, to try to understand if I do not still understand. I go to my friends to explain. That's what I will do in that case."

Precious, a student with albinism (SWA), explained that students with albinism struggle to see the board in the classroom. However, she avoids sitting at the front of the class because she detests what she calls the "spotlight." This quest for anonymity in the classroom helps her to avoid being looked at in "certain kinds of ways" but means that she cannot see the board clearly. This is less of an issue in the virtual classroom but mostly, learning is face to face:

> "Some of my classes are virtual. Most of my classes are physical. I have this habit of not asking questions. Like always hiding, I do not want to be called out to talk to the class. On my first day, my level adviser, had me to introduce myself to everybody. I had to stand up. It was oh!...bad. I do not like it. I hate being in the spotlight. Having these attentions and stuff. People always look at me in certain ways. I have become used to it. Again, I have to." (Precious, SWA, FUA)

### *Note-taking*

Out of the five classes I observed at FUA, only one lecturer used a PowerPoint presentation and gave out materials to students to make copies. Lecturers at FUA tend to dictate their notes, pausing to explain key concepts as the lecture progresses. A lecturer teaching a calculation course had put some equations on the board to solve. Hearing-impaired students who rely, to a very large extent, on their vision struggle to see the board in a poorly lit lecture room with or without an interpreter. Visually impaired students who rely on their hearing ability find it difficult to follow the class activities due to noise from in and out of the classroom while physically impaired students fight to climb stairs to access lecture hall. No student who falls into a SWD category at FUA is spared from the challenges and the incoherence of the university's inclusion policy that determines their participation.

Anthony recalled that while sitting at the front helped to concentrate and follow the class, it was also vital for notetaking or using a tape recorder to record the lecture. Many lecturers will have no awareness that a visually impaired student will need to record the lecture in addition

to relying on classmates for lecture notes. They can also respond with little sympathy or understanding. Anthony said:

> "The way some of them even talk to you when you are trying to even record them. You have to start appealing to them that this is the only way you can get your own lecture that you do not have to depend on notes because some of them these notes that they are even talking about, some of them were not even giving notes. I mean, to start with, and sometimes when they do, the way they dictate, you can't sit at the back. You can't possibly say you want to get the notes from your colleagues because they might have copied the wrong thing."

It is disturbing but clearly a given that students have to make special appeals to their lecturers, simply for permission to record a lecture. This highlights not only a lack of awareness among lecturers but an institutional failure to raise awareness and make appropriate adjustments. In the case of FUA, it is the students who must negotiate adjustments that will enable their participation.

Hassan negotiated permission to record lectures in his first year, but the audio quality was poor, so he had to engage his friend as note-taker. Gabriel asked me to help him listen to the lecture he had recorded on his phone. He planned to replay the lecture to his interpreter, who would then interpret the explanations the lecturer gave during the lecture. Support staff at DSC told me this is a strategy that they employ when there is a timetable clash between the students they interpret for. As I played the voice note through his phone, the lecturer's voice could barely be heard above the echoes thundering around the lecture hall. The interpreter later rejected the recording as useless. The excerpt below illustrates Hassan's struggle with note- taking in class.

> "But I remember in my hundred level days I do record. But the feedback is not always good. Maybe when the lecturer is dictating or explaining anything. Students will often make noise or the public address system is not good. The recording will not be that clear. So, I scan my material, give other students, and ask some of them to read for me. On getting to 200, my friend Lekan is the one that always helps me to type my notes. Anytime the lecturer dictates in class, immediately, he will carry my system, type the note and save as a word document. He compiles my note till I have a complete note to read. From there, I read it myself with the aid of the screen reader."

***Classroom Engagement***

In my classroom observations, I was keen to observe classroom engagement, namely, how SWDs actively participated in class discussions and raised questions when appropriate. But it is important to note that student participation in the classroom depends to a very large extent on the lecturer's intentional design of the course content and classroom arrangements. With the lecture being the dominant method at FUA, student participation is usually limited to responding to the lecturer's questions, mainly, "Is that clear?" "Do you understand?" when the lecturer is dictating their notes. For SWDs, who are often relegated to the "zones of non-being", participation in the classroom is further contingent on the nature of their impairment. In this regard, deaf students are perhaps the most challenged, as without an interpreter, they are excluded from class activities. One interpreter I spoke to, described the elation they felt when their work successfully facilitated the student's participation:

> "In the last semester, with my students in [name of course], a lecturer in the department asked a question in the class. My student answered the question. As she signed the answer, I voiced it out. The lecturer was happy that he gave her 1000 *naira*. I was wowed that my student is participating and the whole class became aware that we have a student here. That is the joy. Apart from the salary, the joy the interpreter receives is when your student is fully participating" (Mr Uthman, DSC Staff, FUA).

Participation in the classroom is reliant on the level of support a lecturer has put in place to support the particular needs of SWDs. This appears to be often initiated by the student. For example, Sophia narrated how in announcing her presence in class, she had explained her impairment to the lecturer. SWDs announce their presence in the lecture hall in several ways. One of them is to put on their voice recorder, which gives a loud notification sound as the lecture is about to begin. For deaf students, the presence of the interpreter or volunteer interpreter, signals to the lecturer that a student with hearing impairment is in the class. But the reality of the large class sizes at FUA means that lecturers do not even know all the students on their course let alone their needs, including those with invisible disabilities and other differences students bring to the classroom. Sophia described how she feels about her participation in the classroom:

> "I used to feel they should know sometimes. And then, like I try to explain to them. I tried to make them know, especially when I am in class. They are not always aware because, they use lecture method to teach us. They do not really

> teach us. They just come to class, dictate their notes, explain what they feel like. Sometimes they do not even come to class, they just send materials."

Students' willingness to participate is largely determined by the extent to which the pedagogical environment enables them to do so. Most classrooms at FUA appear to be "disabling": students have to rely on friends to help them clarify or visualise course contents or voice out their contribution to the classroom. Classroom participation is a complex endeavour, particularly when no provision exists for students with disabilities.

Large class sizes make participation more difficult and disproportionately impacts SWDs. Amidst 500 students in the science lecture theatre, Patrick lamented the poor facilities that hindered classroom participation: "some lecturers will just concentrate on the board, talking quietly, you will not even see what they're writing on the board from afar". Like other deaf students who only go to class for the sake of attendance, Patrick mentioned that what he does is "just follow my course outline to read. I attend most of the lectures to pick some of their words. I follow my course outline or PDF they release and YouTube videos, they help a lot. You just watch it as if you're watching movie".

He told me that all students are demanding "active classes.":

> "What do I mean by active classes? Not classes where you do not understand what the lecturer is saying. That the lecturer will be speaking to himself only, even if we are five hundred students, you must not teach all five hundred students at once. You can divide them into groups."

Addressing this requires new thinking in terms of the use of space, location and even time, in and around our conceptualisation of the curriculum and of pedagogy.

Based on my interviews with staff in the DSC, they were well aware of how lack of support for SWDs was acutely felt in large classes. The dearth of "active classes" is driven by so many issues such as decaying and inadequate infrastructure and the logic of "built pedagogy", (Monahan, 2002) where the system has failed to evolve its understanding of learning spaces. The logic of "built pedagogy" is associated with the proliferation of modern solutions for learning landscapes, which reinforces or mediates certain educational practices. These solutions by university leaders fail to reflect the changing preferences, future possibilities and diversity of student populations. As Patrick mentioned, active classes should foster

meaningful, connective and inclusive engagement. This request being made by FUA students characterises a shift from a performative paradigm of learning to a participative paradigm of practice which involves identifying and purposefully embracing moments of intersection that converge at the edges of personal experiences, whether physical, digital, or emotional (Elkington and Dickinson, 2023).

### *Peer Support*

As I hinted in the previous chapter when discussing the post-liminal access work that SWDs do as they enter the university, this work sets in motion the dependency journey of these students at FUA. Peer support is described as a characteristic of a connected learning landscape in which students can "keep in touch" with one another and support each other's development. Implicit to this is the idea of a symbiotic relationship in which everyone feels good about the connection. But the peer support work that enables the participation of SWDs requires, as Olutoyin puts it, a level of sacrifice. As a disabled student on campus, one can be seen as and feel very demanding, like one's credit has already been used up before one even gets to the learning landscape. A case in point is Hassan's friend, who assumes the role of a note-taker for his friend:

> "On getting to 200 level, my friend is the one that helps me to type my notes. Any time we are writing in class, immediately, he will carry my system, type the note and save as Word document. He compiles my note till I have a complete note to read. From there, I read it myself with the aid of the screen reader."

I asked students how they felt about the support they received from staff and peers. They told me that some staff are supportive, as we have seen in the case of Sophia and others, being given a front seat and materials to read. But the peer support that they receive means so much more and determines their sense of belonging in the class. These supportive and "sacrificial" friends often go over and above what is asked of them, to make sure their disabled friend can feel present, as Anthony describes below:

> "We go to class together, we do everything around campus together. Before then, it wasn't easy for me. I could recall when I was in the lecture hall and we needed to move from that hall to another. Everybody went out, and I was the only one left in the hall.

> I was like, how will I go out? So I picked my cane and tried to find my way out of the hall. Someone later came in and helped me out of the hall."

In some of my observations, I noticed students sitting in the class using their pre-arranged supportive network. They sat with those classmates who were willing to assist in providing supplementary information or clarifying instructions from the lecturer. This collaborative environment fostered a sense of inclusivity and facilitated the student's active engagement with the lecture delivery. But the classroom can be a lonely and desolate place for deaf students who often feel "left behind". As Yemi and Temima's accounts below illustrate, their 'hearing' friends will respond to the register on their behalf, and will also take notes and take the time to explain certain topics:

> "From staff, not too sure. I feel supported by my fellow students, by copying notes, them answering for me when I am being called for attendance. There is a particular course mate now friend who takes her time to re-explain some topics I find difficult to assimilate. Their support makes me feel accepted and have a sense of belonging here. I have never for once had an ugly experience with any course mate since I started schooling here (Yemi, HI, FUA).

> "Most of the time, I read and research my course because I used to feel left behind in class because of my hearing disability. I do not benefit so much from lectures even with my interpreter around, and most of the time, my interpreter is not always in class with me so I have to spend a lot of time reading and researching for better understanding. I do that most of the time alone" (Temima, HI, FUA).

Most HI students in this study expressed that while they did not feel supported by lecturers, they were very grateful for the support they received from fellow students". This is partly because they understand that it is the staff's responsibility, even if they do not understand sign language, to make some provisions for their class participation. This becomes more poignant when they see their fellow students who lack sign language knowledge, trying to either learn the language or make the extra effort to pass around "important information like which chapter or resources to read assessment or test to do etc" (Yemi).

## 7.5. "21st Century Blindness"

This section explores how SWDs interact and intra-act (Barad, 2003) within digital spaces and assistive technologies. I explore how students attend classes online and how they use assistive technologies to facilitate their inclusion. I discuss why FUA's transition to online classes failed to remove barriers to learning for SWDs and what the students expected from lecturers and staff of FUA in these new digital learning spaces.

I begin by looking at what SWDs make of communication and information technologies and the changing nature of disability needs. When I asked Sophia about her co-curricular activities, she mentioned that she had "found a new joy in advocacy ": she went on to explain that she had been raising awareness about the daily struggles of people with disabilities in Nigeria through outreach activities which has given so much agency and empowerment. One such activity consisted of a 30-minute radio slot in Arewa to campaign against gender-based violence and disability. In the changing culture of disability needs, her account feels important in disrupting mainstream assumptions about the experience of SWDs. It points to the need for new lenses to account for their participation in the evolving digital world:

> "I met him, and he was like, no problem, we are happy to host you. He asked me do you use braille and all that? I told him my blindness is 21st-century blindness. And he laughed. Are you serious? I said yes, we are off braille. I asked for fifteen minutes, and they gave me thirty minutes, and when I was about to leave, he gave me his card and said, "anytime you want to advocate or share anything about people with disabilities, you are always welcome."

### *Digital Accessibility*

Based on Sophie's experience, I wondered what she meant by 21st century blindness and what it means for a 21st century university. I also wondered how FUA had dealt with this challenge during and after the pandemic. I asked students at FUA, especially students with visual impairments, about their use of assistive software to stay updated with classes, read course materials, and interact socially with families and friends. Hassan, for instance, remarked that assistive technologies built by people like them and for them, have helped their quest for independence and inclusive participation: they can keep abreast of happenings on the class's WhatsApp group, get to know when lecturers have scheduled or released learning materials. One general software that most students with visual impairments at FUA use, is the Talk-back

function embedded in android phones, which helps them to navigate apps and surf the net. They also use JAWS (Job Access With Speech) as a laptop screen reader assistant, in what some describe as an "enabling loop". However, getting this software or compatible gadgets comes at an extra cost. As Sophia mentions, students with disabilities are likely to pay more because they need an enhanced device that can work for their accessibility needs:

> "When you think of getting a phone or gadget, you have to think about the accessibility, which comes with double the original price. Or almost double."

Students at FUA see their phones as assistive technology in its own right, with the more embedded assistive technologies having tailored assistive features. This is why the rehabilitation curriculum includes digital training and traditional support for persons with visual impairment during rehabilitation. Hassan said that he was more comfortable with typing than using the voice notes function of the WhatsApp, because it helps him master his keyboard use and deploy emojis that allow him to convey and 'read' the tone of the conversation:

> "I prefer typing, I do not really do voice notes. People always ask me you do not send me voice notes. I do not really like it. I take my time typing. My talkback reads messages for me, and I open the WhatsApp keyboard space, I have mastered the qwerty keyboard. I use the qwerty keyboard on my phone too, I just place my hand on it and my talk back reads out the text and emojis description. This helps us to know the tone of the conversation."

He further describes how these tools have altered the way visually impaired people communicate with themselves and are perceived by others. It has eliminated barriers to identifying things like colours and cash, when they do not have sighted persons around them in and outside the university. He also recounted how he used *TapTap See* during rehabilitation, where there were about ten visually impaired people in the room:

> "I won't say I am that good in that technology stuff, but they build apps every day that are helping us. When I was in the blind centre, we had an app called TapTap See. You know we do not normally have sighted people around us; we were ten in our room. We do not even have partially sighted. If I want to check my clothes now, maybe the colour, I will just take my phone, open the app and take a picture of the clothes. It will then tell me this is a black cloth, grey, black and so on. I use the app to identify currency denominations, too, it will tell me this 10 NGN, 20 NGN and all of that. But now, maybe because we have people around us, I do not use it that often again."

A lecturer who has worked with deaf students as an interpreter at the DSC, told me how Whatsapp communications has reduced the number of deaf students missing out on lectures and assessments. Most lecturers announce tests or lectures in the class so unless an interpreter is present, students with hearing impairment tend to miss out on this announcement:

> "I will meet the interpreter and query why are you not in the class and then take them to meet with the lecturer. I help the lecturer to see why the student missed it, it is not that the student did not want to be there, but the student did not have the information. But now that we have WhatsApp group chat for students, it makes it easier that deaf students are always online to make sure they get such information. So it's no longer like before when they missed lectures or tests" (Dr Arije, Academic Staff, FUA).

Assistive technology is also widening horizons: Olutoyin described how with the help of a voice-aloud reader, she had taken an interest in creative writing and reading, as she could read so many of her favourite books and novels. However, she then stopped writing because her system had crashed and was intending to start writing again as soon as she had a new system. I asked how she finds using her phone to read and if it had helped with her integration as a student on campus:

> "I started using an Android phone in 2017. But I was not using it to read books because the phone was prohibited in boarding school. I was focused on the use of laptop. Using laptop to read, I enjoy using the JAWS on my laptop to read academic books and my phone to read non-academic books… Yes, you can at least research, download materials, and try to get information from people about your department. Also, for virtual classes. I use the voice-aloud reader to read pdf. Then WhatsApp and Zoom have been very accessible."

### *Virtual Classes*

Virtual classes at FUA were ushered in by the worldwide closure of the universities during the pandemic. At the University's convocation ceremony, while granting a press conference, FUA's vice-chancellor told the congregation that the university had responded effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic and ASUU strike by swiftly adopting a virtual classroom system, followed by a phased return to face-to-face classes:

> "We were able to use the blended learning model to complete the interrupted 2019/2020 session, after which we began immediately the 2020/2021 session. To achieve this feat, the University spent more than N68 million to improve the university-wide internet infrastructures. We increased Glo's bandwidth from 620Mbps to 1Ggps. We also acquired an additional 1Ggps internet bandwidth from NgREN (Nigerian Research and Education Network). In the

> like manner, we acquired Zoom Licenses at the cost of 67,000 USD for delivery of lectures, meetings and tutorials; 2000 for 300 concurrent participants, 8 Licenses for 1000, 7 for 500, 5 webinar licenses for 3000 and 2 webinar licenses for 5000 concurrent participants. The 3000-participant licences were also shared among Faculties, Departments and academic staff of the University."

In his capacity as the chair of the e-learning committee, a professor at FUA told me that the university had to train staff on how to use these new technologies to deliver classes and lectures. Many of the staff had found it a particular challenge to moderate students' participation. The chairman was keen to emphasise the importance of inclusion in this respect:

> "As the chairman of the E-learning committee, one of the things I ensured we did was to look at how to make blended learning useful for everyone. The question was how we accommodate some categories of people with disabilities. Online teaching is good for everyone, including people without impairment. However, students with hearing impairment may be excluded. During the training, I told the lecturers that whatever they put online must have audio, texture or subtitles. It is dear to me as the Dean of the faculty to ensure that we include them." (Chairman E-learning committee, FUA).

I spoke to other stakeholders in the university to understand more widely the university's strategy for the digitalisation of the classroom, assessment and what it means for SWDs. The Director of Academic Planning, for instance, said that while it is still early to ask students to evaluate their virtual classes, the university has a way of asking students to give feedback on their courses when they go to the CBT centre to write exams. There is little evidence, from the university's perspective, that SWDs have benefitted from these sessions, which, according to the director, is "where research like yours comes in." This was an encouraging moment for me as a researcher: I came to realise that the university might be receptive to research findings like mine. I then used the opportunity to relay my preliminary findings on virtual classes, based on my interactions with SWDs on the FUA campus and what the students would like to see change. Students with disabilities across the clusters, seemed to view virtual classes as not designed to include them. Most students at FUA can attend virtual classes with their phones. Indeed, Patrick told me he does almost everything academic on his phone, including watching YouTube videos, downloading PDF materials and reading for exams:

> "I read [course materials] on phone. Although I have a [computer] system in 100 level that I was using, it's not working effectively again."

Also, Olutoyin, when asked about her experience of virtual classes introduced by the university, said, "I have not really attended any classes online. Last semester, my phone wasn't good." During FUA's transition, it was apparent that the university management had invested in internet infrastructure on campus. Students away from campus still find it difficult to join online classes, mainly because they do not have sufficiently strong internet connections at home or do not have money to buy data. While exploring student's experience of virtual classes, internet data to fully participate in virtual classes is seen as an acute need as a student at FUA. Most data subscription services in Nigeria operate on a pay-as-you-go basis. With private telecommunication companies, an average monthly subscription is about 5,000 NGN.

Jude lamented how the last virtual class he had attended was not sufficiently accommodating; it had been held on Telegram, and the lecturer was dropping voice notes instead of texts on the platform:

> "The last class was in early December, we did it on Telegram. At first, I thought we would be using text messages for the class; unfortunately, we used voice notes... As a person who is deaf, listening to voice notes is not something I find enjoyable. I complained, but nothing was done, and I left the class halfway" (Jude, HI, FUA).

As lecturers actively tried to minimise the need for a strong internet connection, which most students at FUA lack, or reduce the burden of data charges that students incur, they could not mitigate the exclusionary tendencies of their classroom designs. Many students also mentioned that they only attended the classes for attendance, and sometimes did not even get to mark their presence because of the internet connection. Patrick, who is partially sighted, offers a far more positive perspective. Based on his experience of how the physical large classes have denied him access to the curriculum, he feels that the online classes provide equal rights. He welcomes the online space where there are no arrangements to be made: "you do not have to rush to the class to get a good seat at the front. You can join the class on your phone and understand what the lecturer is saying."

> "Let's say, you'll be able to see what's going on. You have equal rights in that online class, unlike those in the front and those in the back. We are going to be watching it on the phone. If you do not get it or if I do not get it [what the lecturer is teaching], that's my problem. That means it's me that's not thinking well. So, we have equal rights. But with the front and back seats in physical classes, that's the school problem" (Patrick, Interview at FUA).

Gabriel took a more polemic stance. Addressing the digital divide, he argued that digitalisation does not mean democratisation or even translate necessarily into more accessibility. This brings back the unaddressed concern of the chairman of the E-learning committee. Gabriel's experience shows that these concerns are still there, and SWDs fall out of the provisions of FUA's strategy for online classes. What this means is that the digital classroom will not remove barriers to learning in and of itself; in fact, it can exacerbate existing inequalities and further exclude SWDs by alienating them from the digital system:

> "How can the school decide to go on virtual method of teaching without considering the inaccessible and difficulties special learners going through? There was a virtual class last week before Christmas break. It was a general course. I could not hear the lecturer's words, and I was in my hostel at eight a.m. What did I do? I recorded the lecturer's voice and presented it to my interpreter; he listened and interpreted for me."

Again, this extract shows that while other students can somehow make sense of why they are in a virtual class, Gabriel has the extra task of recording the lecturer's voice and then handing it to his sign language interpreter who must then be able to relay the contents to him. In terms of time, this means that while other students spent two hours in that class, Gabriel would have had to spend four hours or more, not only because of his impairment but because disability inclusion was an afterthought when FUA transitioned to virtual classes. The students I interviewed seemed to understand that lecturers have an even bigger role to play in online classes. The preference for face-to-face teaching was expressed with phrases such as "physical classes are better". Students who longed to be accommodated more by the lecturers, realised that the climate of the physical classroom was simply being transplanted to the virtual classroom without a change in lecturer's attitude or pedagogical design.

To further explore this digital exclusion and the work that SWDs engaged in to ensure that they had some level of participation during lockdown, I asked interviewees to suggest how the university can improve their experiences in virtual classrooms. Gabriel suggested that,

> "If it's like a video conference, an interpreter should and must be provided for me to benefit. Or a platform that have captioning capabilities should be used. This is the only way to include people with hearing impairment like myself."

Jude proposed that lecturers should prepare lecture notes and make them available before the virtual class, as this will help him "have a better context of what's been said (in case the Interpreter flops, network froze, or the live transcript is not accurate) and easily follow."

> "Lecturers should use Google Meets due to its in-app live transcript feature. Virtual class where the mode of delivery is written or presentation slides. Stable internet connection on campus" (Jude HI, FUA).

Having experienced the challenges of attending these classes, Jude realised that they could be improved if lecturers were willing to make extra effort to include people like him. These accounts are a reminder that while inclusion policies and strategies may be in place, academic or institutional culture can be barriers to their effective implementation. It could be argued that the transition to virtual classes at FUA was abrupt due to the pandemics. As in many other universities, lecturers were not well trained to use the tools available and learning activities were not well integrated. The DVC academics who have been at the forefront of FUA's digital assessment also mentioned that while most lecturers might be willing to support SWDs in their class, they might not know what accessibility tools are available within the learning environment system. What is clear from student and staff interactions about FUA's virtual classes is that Zoom and other platforms were only used to prevent crowded classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The blended approach to learning that the Vice-Chancellor envisaged failed to materialise because of the issues Jude and others mentioned above.

Lecturers were and still are most comfortable with traditional lecture methods which involves dictating notes to the students who then write them down. By the time of my fieldwork, traces of virtual classes were almost gone as the university had returned to fully physical classes, except for general courses where the lecture theatre capacity was insufficient. The next section describes the assessment culture at FUA and how, despite calls from SWDs for more independence, it has created a tyranny of restrictions and dependency.

## 7.6. Assessment Cultures

FUA CBT

Feel the bustle, make the hustle,
Stop the grumble, do not be humble.
You heard from sermons to wait your time,
Here's the opposite, waiting is crime.

You come so early to leave not late,
But last comers lead, a fact we hate.
You push no one and stand in line,
But they push your father, like trolleys in a mine.
The queue is the way but your mind says nay,
They'll squeeze out what you read all night and day,

For a space for two, you ll find a million,
So be the rows they patch to columns,
From the skies, the sun sends it's Facebook-like reactions,
Sucking us dry from the heat of evaporation.
Till the gateways open and let lose the salt river,
Steaming our strengths and leaving behind a fever.
After fighting for hours that seemed like months,
From nowhere, you 'll hear "hey, leave the queue, I saw you
shunt"

Says the cadet, who forms like a soldier,
One you could beat if not for the FACE SDC order.
know ill enter in sha ALLAH
But what will I write, sub-hanal AH!?

(A poem written by a student on their experience at the CBT centre.)

When I arrived at FUA, the second semester's examinations were just being completed. I was, therefore, able to explore the assessment culture of the university, even before going to the classroom to observe students' participation. The most significant challenge that SWDs face during their preparation is the lack of accessible learning materials to prepare for exams. For courses with large class size the examination itself takes place in the University's test centre and tests are computer-based[10]. The way courses are structured at FUA, most lecture notes

[10] FUA has a Computer-Based Test centre being managed by its IT unit. All computer-based tests take place here.

or materials are not released in bits. There are no online materials attached to the module or a learning management system such as Blackboard. Students have to therefore curate learning materials for themselves. The only exception is the General Studies unit which has produced textbooks the university-wide general study course like Use of English (GNS 101). The university has responded to a request from students with visual impairment, with the support of the DSC, to produce accessible soft copies for reading and examination preparation for these general courses. But learning materials for other courses remain inaccessible to students with visual impairment. They then have to do the work to convert materials to readable format, if they have the financial capacity to do so, or look for a friend who can read to them as they write with their typewriter, stylus or computer. Often during my stay at FUA, I have been that friend.

In this section, I have described the 'fitting' work that students engage in to obtain study materials and notes, how SWDs prepare for examinations, their experience in the examination hall[11] and the need to be continuously demanding reasonable adjustments within FUA's inconsistent policy for participative equity.

### *Copyright Code*

> "When I came to this school few years ago, we did not have a resource room. Having a visually impaired person in a school without a resource room is like you sending a farmer to the farm without a hoe or cutlass. What do you expect him to work with? We approached the office of the deputy vice-chancellor then, we told him about the resource room and he told us the school doesn't have the financial capacity to give us a resource room and he advised us that we could approach external bodies like NGOs and Philanthropists and the likes" (Anthony, VI, FUA).

I met Anthony early on in my visit to FUA. It was an important encounter as he alerted me to some salient issues to pay attention to as I started my fieldwork. The phrase that remained with me was: "This space is not built for people like us". This statement turned out to be a pivotal entry point into this research. Through this interview, I learned so much about his challenges, associations, advocacy, networks, and the support he received from his colleagues in the hostel and his classmates. He showed me how technology has helped him to study, communicate, write, socialise and network. He spoke of his life outside of studying, going to

[11] Lecture theatres are usually converted to examination halls during the exam period.

the church or the market. He also was able to describe in detail what it means for him to attend lectures and writes examinations. He talked about the absence of a resource person to print lecture materials, put them in a brailed format, or scan documents for e-readers. Another event that was central in terms of gaining insights on the SWD experience is being invited by Anthony to be his mobility buddy: he had written to the vice-chancellor demanding the employment of a resource person, which he mentioned at our first meeting. I went with him to print and submit this letter. The next chapter situates this textual relation within the grand "transformative work" that SWDs do at FUA. But the central issue I wish to focus on in this section is the work that SWDs do to obtain study materials.

As mentioned by Yemi and Temima, students with hearing impairment copy their friends' notes and rely on them for materials. Saidu said a few lecturers give him materials before class. At KSU and APU too lecturers generally did not provide materials. Their role appeared to be limited to presenting the course contents during class and responding to students' questions in class time. My observations and student accounts indicate that only a handful of lecturers will provide any materials, based on the lecturers' assumption that if students are given lecture notes, they may not come to class. Instead, lecture notes are dictated in piecemeal throughout the semester. Sometimes, lecture notes are given out a few days before the exams; this practice is common among staff who have not been able to cover the course outline comprehensively.

When I asked Sophia how she obtains material to prepare for exams, she lamented the lack of resource staff to prepare their materials in accessible format. She told me that she had given up on the DSC, as they had failed to provide effective support for what she called "a mad process". She saw this as the result of the lack of a decisive university-wide strategy to make learning materials accessible to students. She stated that lecturers and staff at the DSC operated on the assumption that the "students will always find a way".

> "Because most lecturers give hard copies of materials and they do not give soft copy materials. We do not have a resource person, that's for the resource room for the blind. When it comes to scanning. So then if you call that you want to scan materials, it's a process I do not want to think about. It is a mad process. Last semester, I did not talk about it, I just had to find a way for myself" (Sophia, Interview at FUA).

She then described the complicated process of curating resources for her course. The dependency of SWDs at FUA emerged as a salient issue. While FUA does have an inclusion policy covering some parts of university life, there does not appear to be any policy specifically covering curriculum assessment. As a SWD, participating at FUA requires a lot of work: it invariably involves devising ways of "doing" things yourself "instead of crying in the hostel because you are blind" (Sophia); a reference to Glory that was reported to the counselling unit by her roommates.

> "So this is what I do. I get my course outline and check what they have done from the first, second and third class. Then I go to Halima's house, because she does the recording for me. She reads her note to me and also repeat it as a recording. I could just read with that, so sometimes when I am reading, I have my system, I listen to the recording and jot down the key points with my laptop. Then I can use my notes to revise the lecture's main points. But if I have soft copy material, that's fine. I could just transfer it to my system and read."

Sophia's narrative illustrates the additional barriers created by the absence of soft copy materials and resources. Even though there is an extra layer of work to be done in using the screen reader to read, providing soft copy materials halves the journey towards completing the course. Anthony, as another visually impaired person, had been at FUA far longer than Sophia. His experience starkly highlights the institutional neglect of the academic needs of students with visual impairment. The DSC's mandate covers deaf students. So while deaf students complain about the dearth of interpreters to support them in their classes, at least the expectation is within its mandate. Students with visual impairment, on the other hand, feel like outcasts. The centre is ostensibly there to help all SWDs on campus and "practices inclusive education to the letter." Yet Anthony has seen little change since his first year on campus with regards to accommodating his needs as a visually impaired student.

> "That is one of the major issues that we VI students face in this school. We always have difficulty getting materials. I could recall, when I came to the school in my 100 level [first year] then, we were to pay for my departmental textbook. It was in hard copy. Which is useless to me as a VI person. So I requested for the soft copy to make it easy for me to read on my phone or laptop. The HOD then said they can't release the soft copy. They told me it belonged to the department, and they did not want any infringement on their copyright. So I bought the hardcopy and then pay someone to scan it for me, which was quite expensive."

Salient to note in Anthony's account is how institutional bureaucracies or governing modes undermine accessibility. Certainly as Vaughan (2021) argues, it invites a rethink on how the ruling relations of copyright discourses impact on the learning of students with disabilities. In fact, the Nigerian Copyright Act 2022 now explicitly exempts people with disabilities, allowing the provision of an "accessible format copy".

> "Notwithstanding the provisions of any other section of this Act, an authorised entity may, without the permission of the owner of copyright in a work, make or procure an accessible format copy of a work or subject matter and supply the copy to beneficiary persons by any means, including non-profit lending, or electronic communication by wire or wireless means…"(Copyright Act 2022, Section 26.1).

One could infer that while the department is concerned by a violation its "intellectual property" it is as well driven by an economic imperative. It wants to maintain its distributive license so that students are forced to buy the books published by the department**.** While the book is not available "for sale" in soft copies, there is an obvious penalty therefore for people like Anthony who have to purchase a hard copy and then pay for the materials to be accessible as soft copies. This combination of somatic and material work is sometimes less than useful by the time a SWD enters the examination hall, as often, they will only have access to what they have heard in the class or has been read to them. It illustrates that the lack of accessibility provision in the curriculum has time and economic implications for the SWD, as well as its emotional and mental impact. If a student cannot pay, they take their leave by which I mean that they just fall back into the *Fanonian* "zone of nonbeing ─ an extraordinarily sterile and arid region" (Fanon, 1952 p. 10) that the system expects them to be. This is how FUA's institutional culture perpetuates hegemonic ableism in and through the curriculum (Apple, 2004).

Denying accessibility to soft copy materials has other consequences. Laolu described how relying on a crude and limited curating process, constrained by copyright issues, he ended up with the wrong materials, in a process he dismisses as "rubbish":

> "I mean, to start with, and sometimes when they do, the way they dictate, you can't sit at the back. You can't possibly say you want to get the notes from your colleagues because they might have copied the wrong thing. You then read rubbish, write rubbish in the exams and get rubbish marks. When materials are being distributed, you know they're selling textbooks you need to buy. There is

> no provision for softcopy for visually impaired persons. Even when you approach them, they tell you they can't make the soft copy because of you... You have to buy it. You have to look for a way to scan it., you know, like scanning a page with fifty naira or a hundred naira. You know, just a page, and if the textbook has about three hundred pages, you know what it is? and some of the lecturers make these textbooks very compulsory because sometimes they even set questions from there."

Thus, SWDs are obliged to bear the cost not only of buying the hard-copy material but then the cost of scanning the whole text and translating it into readable materials. Hassan told me that in his four years at FUA, he has never been able to use the resource room put together by their association's efforts (I explore this further in the next chapter), because the room has no resource person. As a student in a single parent family, Hassan said, "if I do not have the money to do the scanning, I will ask my friends to read for me. So, I will record what they read. Then I save it. So, I can listen to it."

### *Preparation as Work*

While previous sections have referred to the challenges SWDs face in preparing for and sitting their exams, this section describes this work in more detail. In doing so, it continues to build up a nuanced picture of the continuous work of strategies, resistance, dependency and stresses that SWDs face in ensuring their inclusion in the university assessment process.

The accounts presented here are based on my observation of the pen and paper exams and the Computer Based Test (CBT) exam, corroborated by interviews with students, staff and leaders at FUA. They shed light on the university's protracted discriminative culture of assessment. As highlighted in every chapter in this thesis, there are policy attempts and creative mechanisms deployed by staff and management at FUA. However, such mechanisms are at best ineffective and inconsistent; meanwhile, students with disabilities, particularly those with VI, believe their needs are deliberately not being met, due to a lack of awareness and staff attitudes to disability inclusion.

I start this section by laying out the "preparation work" that students engage in as the exam approaches and the anxiety it generates, especially when students have not succeeded in accessing study materials or have been unable to find a classmate who can help them. I describe

the "night classes" for study that are offered as an alternative to a library that is inaccessible to many SWDs. I then explore the experience of SWDs in the exam hall and the impact of the assessment culture on their performance.

### *"I only read because I want to pass"*

When asked about her favourite daytime activity, Esosa responded: "*I like reading. Why? Because I want to pass. That's why I like reading."* What motivates her is, in a way, the stress that she knows she will feel when it comes to the exam. She said she feels more composed if she has spent time reading. She also told me that she tries to wake up at night to read or use the library during the day. By contrast, for Patrick, "reading is like taking poison". The exam period comes with an inevitable momentum and pressure to read. But as a partially sighted student, reading can be strenuous. Patrick attends night classes and also has devised a reading method that involves listening to music:

> "I just follow my reading method and use my headphone. I just plug it into my ear and listen to music. I do read overnight. I go to night classes."

Night classes are part of a time-honoured culture of self-study at FUA. The university library closes at 7 pm except during exam periods when it operates a 24-hour service. Due to the library's closure at night, students living in university accommodation seek refuge in empty lecture theatres because it's a lot quieter than reading in their hostels and also a meeting point for peer tutoring. In the account below, Anthony describes how and why getting the reading done well before the exam makes things easier:

> "I try to start reading as soon as possible to make it easy. I go through my recordings or available material after every lecture. I record lectures on my phone, so I listen to them repeatedly. To get me prepared on time. During exam time, I read in my hostel. But at times, the noise in the hostel doesn't allow me to read. I move out of the hostel, and I read outside. During my 100 levels, I went for night classes, then I stopped going because of the bad experience some of us had."

Hassan too uses night classes. I interviewed him under a tree outside an empty lecture theatre where he and his friends had come to read in preparation for the course they would attend a few days later. He told me he had been coming to night classes since his "100 level days" and loves following people to night classes. Night classes for students who live off-campus is an alternative to access to a library and provides more reliable power supply than is available in

the student area of the city centre. As the exam period approaches and reading becomes more urgent, the need for reliable power supply becomes more important. As a visually impaired student whose good social skills enable him to gain much support from classmates, Hassan attends night classes because his "mobility or study buddy" does. This strategy makes sense as he needs their help to study effectively as materials are not generally accessible:

> "I have been coming to night classes since the 100 level. But I have had mixed experience of coming to night classes. People challenge why I come to night classes. I love following people to night classes. I can't stay in one place. I use the Law faculty or any other place my mobility buddy uses. The exam I am writing now, I have been coming to night classes to prepare for the exams I have the next day. Most times, I do heart-to-heart with my colleague when preparing for exams. I also read with JAWS on my system or phone. If I have any difficulty reading, I will speak to my friend who will explain it to me."

The night before their exams, students have an additional reason to come to the university campus. As described in chapter five, getting to campus in the morning is an endeavour in itself, so students fear that they might not get to the examination hall on time. This is particularly acute when there is a general course assessment. Some students sleep on wooden benches in class after studying their course materials. They can use the campus washrooms or sneak into the hostel rooms of their friends who live on campus. This means they can then get to the examination halls in the morning.

This night class phenomenon I describe above is not unfamiliar to me. As a student at a Nigerian university, I, too, would spend the night before an exam in classes revising with coursemates. I did not question it. As a participant in the process, I did not understand how the technicality of the system had colonised my lifeworld where night classes were seen as the "right" alternative given the lack of sufficient library provision. Most importantly, I never considered how this culture would be for SWDs. Anthony and Hassan told me about certain kinds of experience they had on campus when going to night classes. The residential area of the university campus is about half a mile from the academic area. The routes connecting the two are not adequately lighted. I have been to classes where bulbs are missing, and the lecture hall was bleak, cold and completely dark. In this regard, Anthony shared why he stopped attending night classes:

> "Like eermm, coming from night class, you see people mugging you and trying to take your phones. It happened to me once, but luckily, we overpowered them and escaped. That was the last time I went to night class. I read in my hostel or outside my hostel."

I was curious about how my interviewees used the campus library while preparing for their exams. Interestingly, out of the students I interviewed at FUA, only Esosa and Patrick enjoyed studying in the library. In the excerpts below, Anthony and Hassan explain why they stopped using the library as a study space.

> "I do not use the library because it is not accessible for VI persons. It is not the one that is designed to accommodate people like us. Because we read with our laptops, and some of us use typewriters. As a visually impaired person, you need a very quiet place to read. If someone has to use a typewriter in the library, the noise will disturb other students. For some of us using a laptop, there is no socket to plug in our laptops. The library is useless for us. I have been there once, but when I saw the structure is not friendly. I couldn't plug my laptop, I stopped going there" (Anthony, VI, FUA).

> "Yes, the library operates twenty-four hours during exams, but they do not have the texts we can read. No braille textbook or something. No soft copies. I have not been to the e-library. Maybe they can get some systems that would be available. I know not every student is interested in reading braille. Some are comfortable using the laptop and soft copy materials. While I was in rehabilitation, I took interest in reading braille and was good to a level. But getting to the university, I have dropped it because I do not see anyone using it. And I do not have access to it. No braille embosser to braille my material. So, it is just recently, that I now read for pleasure. For my exams, I type with my computer, I do not really know how to use typewriter" (Hassan, VI, FUA).

### *Exam Adjustments for SWDs*

> At the Federal University of Arewa, I think the constitution or there is norm of extra thirty minutes for exams. Because first of all, they have to read your questions and you are typing, you are not writing. So you are supposed to get an extra thirty minutes. Some lecturers do not even know you are supposed to get an extra time. It is an unwritten rule, like the you do not queue for bus kind of arrangement (Sophia, VI, FUA).

Sophia's experience illustrates how inclusion for SWDs is addressed in the context of exams. Students are reliant on the support provided by DSC and invigilators, yet some students told me that the university's own policy whereby SWDs are allowed a 30-minute adjustment period, is not always applied. Rather, students have to sometimes request it and justify their request and it is clearly not obvious that this is an actual policy, as Sophia was under the impression that it is an 'unwritten rule'. Furthermore, this adjustment only applies to visually impaired

students, yet deaf students have argued that they too need support during examinations.

In chapter 5, I explained that while DSC support for deaf students is mainly to provide sign language interpreters, visually impaired students are provided with "readers" in the examination hall. Each student is assigned a reader who works with the student on their timetable throughout the exam period. In the excerpt below, Naomi gives an account of the existing provisions for SWDs to write the computer-based tests and her misgivings about how they are expected to manage the adjusted time.

> "The support centre does allocate some readers, as the school computer systems do not have JAWS. They follow us to the exam hall, they communicate with us. They read questions to us in the exam halls. The school extends our time. I think they're trying for that. They give us extra time... Sometimes the time is not enough though, but it is manageable. And it is not enough because someone has to read for you. You have to assimilate. Sometimes you have to tell the person to recap, to read again."

All the VI students I interviewed dislike the current practice of the CBT test where questions are read aloud to them, and the student then speaks their answer to the reader. This practice is similar to the JAMB Equal Opportunity Group's approach for the UTME. Students have repeatedly asked the university to install software that will enable them to undertake exams independently, but no significant action has been undertaken by the DSC or the examination centre. The extract below illustrates how the current assessment culture further stigmatises and excludes SWDs:

> "The CBT courses, I have issues with the exams. For a university like this, I do not know why they are reading aloud when you could just install JAWs on the system for me to do my CBTs like every other person. They do read aloud for us and to me it doesn't make sense. Why are you reading a hundred questions for me, the only thing they get to do is, they then log in to our portals and give us extra time because they know the normal time won't be sufficient for the read-aloud? Because they have to read the question and the options. It is one thing for them to read, it is another thing for it to enter your head to get the answer. For those ones, I am having issues with the CBTs, because of the read aloud. I am still getting used to read aloud for examinations" (Sophia, VI, FUA).

Paper-based examinations are different to computer-based tests as support staff from the centre do not need to accompany students to the hall. With paper-based examinations, the job of reading the question to the students rests on the shoulders of the invigilators themselves.

Students with a visual impairment write their exams with either typewriter or a laptop computer. In the excerpt below, Anthony describes how adjustment for SWDs is implemented in this context. As with computer-based tests, there was a time pressure: with the extra work of printing his answers so they could be packed alongside other scripts, he needed to write quickly:

> "…we call the invigilators to read the questions for written exams. They read the questions, and we write. I use my laptop and after writing, when I am done with my exams, I copy it on my flash and give to one of the invigilators to print for me. I read alone to prepare for exams. We get extra time for CBT's. I do not request extra time for written exams because I type very fast. I go through my work very well before submitting it. So, most times, I finish my exams before most of my colleagues".

However, Olutoyin's experience as the sole SWD in her class, the lack of someone who will read the questions can mean that Olutoyin is unable to sit the examination. The lack of Braille as a reading system for VI students has been very detrimental, particularly for those students who have learnt to use it in secondary school or at the rehabilitation centre.

> "Immediately the invigilators have shared the question papers and answer booklet. I will raise my hand, and some will come and meet me. I will inform the person that I need someone to read for me. If I refuse to raise my hand, no one will look at me, and that is the end of the exam. You have to raise your hand to call their attention to get someone to read the questions for you. I use my typewriter to write as there is no one to mark braille if I use the stylus and Marburg."

In the university, VI students now face what Sophia referred to as "the 21st-century blindness". Computer literacy has become central to learning and assessment but where the software and tools developed– such as JAWS - are not made available, VI students are excluded twice over.

Partially sighted students are discriminated against in other ways. Naomi has to position her body close to the table when she writes on the paper. Few lecturers in her department understand her assessment needs or attend to them during examinations. More often than not she has to disclose her disability, otherwise she is not given the time adjustment she is entitled to in an examination:

> "And they see that I write with pen and paper during exams. I even remember one of the exams, I was embarrassed. I was almost sent out of the hall. Because I bent my head, and I was writing. And an invigilator said, stand up, I think, I

> did not even know she was talking to me at first. When she moved closer, she said, Ohh, I am so sorry. Sit down. Do not worry. Get back to writing, she instructed them to give me extra time."

In this section I have shown that while there are strategies in place at FUA to support SWDs, they are poorly implemented, mainly because the university has not clearly communicated its disability inclusion policies to its staff. Some students' needs are met while others are denied necessary adjustment. Another phenomenon is the one-size-fits-all logic of FUA's inclusion policies. The needs of SWDs are diverse. While the DSC has developed its support for hearing impaired students, there appears to be far less understanding about the specific needs of VI students. As a result, individual students have to fight daily for these needs to be met.

## 7.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have illustrated the participation work that SWDs do to be included in the curriculum. Being included in a space "not built for people like you" is work. I have emphasised how this fitting work is a drain on the energy of these students and a constraint on their aspirations. I started by describing university accommodation and the work that students do to live within these slippery liminal mazes. I then explored their journeys from their homes to the classroom, the impact of the inadequate bus service, the challenges of accessing FUA's campus, and the extent to which SWDs depend upon their mobility buddies to navigate all these barriers to participation. I then mapped out students' interactions with the curriculum delivery at FUA. Drawing on interview extracts, I have described how lecture spaces work for SWDs, how they interact with their peers and what peer support means for their inclusion and participation. Lastly, I examined the assessment culture at FUA, the adjustment policies in relation to exams, the practice of studying at night on campus and students' experience of using the library.

## Chapter 8. Transformation Work

*"Where there is a true commitment to the people which involves the transformation of the reality by which they are oppressed, this theory cannot fail to assign the people a fundamental role in the transformation process."*

*(Paulo Freire, 1970, p.99)*

### 8.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explored how the participation work of SWDs at FUA involves resisting the policies and practices that render them invisible within and outside the curriculum. I further argued that the current disposition of FUA's curriculum and how it is being delivered and assessed, perpetuates hegemony and exclusions. In response, students at FUA were seen using technology to negotiate and ensure their participation. In this chapter, I try to take this argument forward by examining how SWDs negotiate the university's transformation for inclusion. I frame this transformation thesis using examples of the "fixing work" that SWDs do at FUA and relate their work to the textually mediated efforts of their student unions to transform the university and demand accommodation and change.

In what seems to be a departure from seeing power as "discursive" to "productive" in transforming everyday realities, I suture the coordination of these fixing works by looking at how students organise their union, negotiate with author-ities and manage cultural differences within clusters. These fixing works illustrate a challenge to the ongoing "ruling relations" at FUA. Smith describes ruling relations as "that extraordinary or ordinary complex of relations that are textually mediated, that connect us across space and time and organise our everyday lives" (2005, p. 166)

Also in this chapter, I discuss how I deployed a sociological intervention (Touraine, 1981) through the participatory thinking of Paulo Freire (2000) and Augusto Boal's (2000) work, to interrogate the under or lack of representation of SWDs in sports at FUA. I explore how I brought students into a transformative dialogue with the "powers that be" to lead a conversation on the exclusion of SWDs in sports at FUA. As a someone keen on how policy can transform practice, I had to 'midwife' the process that would enable these students to

realise the far-reaching potential of their quest to change institutional cultures for disability inclusion.

## 8.2. Uniting to Resist: How SWDs do the Fixing Work

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the route to recruiting student participants for this study was through student associations. I had some agenda-setting discussions with the leaders of the three clusters of SWDs at FUA, and these meetings shaped my fieldwork and identified the pertinent issues to pursue. This was important methodologically for a study committed to people's actualities. In essence, it was their *problematics or questions* that set the tone and direction this study eventually took. My aim in this section is to map what I call fixing work. The fixing work describes students' activities, overt or covert, to change the situation of things, to put things that are "out of order" within the university into order: in other words, it refers to the work that the SWDs in this study do, to make things work for them and those that follow on behind them.

### *Students Unionism at FUA*

The tradition at FUA is to staff the Students Affairs Unit (SAU) under the vice-chancellor's office with former student leaders who are now staff of the university. This is primarily to keep the work knowledge of student unionism in place at the SAU and to effectively manage the students' activities on campus. Like other federal universities in Nigeria, student unrest, has historically led to the instantiation of strategies by university management to heavily manage and scrutinise the activities of groups before they get "out of hand" (Ogunbameru, 1997 and Animba et al., 1993). These efforts to control any kind of potential dissent mean that all student associations must be registered with the SAU through the student union. The Dean of SAU told me that it is unlawful for students to belong to unregistered associations, and the penalty, according to the student handbook, is expulsion:

> "In the first place, we care for students in the area of hostel accommodation in the university. And we have our rules and regulations concerning student behaviour on campus. We organise orientations to let them know these rules and regulations. The dos and do nots. They need to dress responsibly, to be drug-free and not participate in unrecognised get-togethers or associations. We register their associations and take care of these associations…We also have a

> unit in charge of the student disciplinary committee [SDC]" (Dean, SAU, FUA).

The Dean also told me that since he assumed office, he has tried to mould students' character rather than expelling them. He said, "I decided to see some cases as minor cases that I, as a father, should be able to address instead of getting them to the students' disciplinary committee." To put this remark into context, students seldom win their case at the disciplinary committee, and any case passed on to the committee is seen as having gone beyond the "moulding" or management of the SAU. The disciplinary element in the functions of the SAU means that a unit that was intended to be welcoming to students, is in fact a place that students avoid visiting, as Naomi, a VI student, explains that nobody goes to the SAU unless you have problems with accommodation, association or the SDC:

> "Well not that I used to frequent there like that, I was an executive for the association for visually impaired students. We have an association, I frequent there because we have a lot to do there, and sometimes I go there to book hostels for incoming students" (Naomi, VI Student, FUA).

The Dean, Sub-Dean and support staff at the SAU, presented the unit's strategy to me as a carrot-and-stick approach to behaviour management. But students are often quick to emphasize the stick approach rather than the carrot, when describing their relations with the SAU, including the students' union officers. FUA's student union is under the auspices of the SAU. The latter manages the activities of the union, which then oversees the activities of other associations on campus. The union has adopted the three-tier style of government in Nigeria, as it comprises an executive, legislative and judiciary. Elections are conducted during the second semester in a process that has been described by the students as heavily managed by the SAU which vets and clears candidates before the election. Anthony for instance told me about the inadequacy of the student union in representing the interests of SWDs and pushing for an institutional change that would make the university "easy" for them. He also pointed out that while there is a representative for the SWDs at the SU's Senate Council, there is a lack of diversity as the university is generally dominated by the voice of the HI clusters. Later in this chapter, I explore how the issue of representation across clusters has been pursued by the representative of SWDs at FUA.

### *Students with Disabilities and their Associations*

The interests of students with hearing, visual and physical impairments are represented by three corresponding associations at FUA: National Association of Nigerian Deaf Students (NANDS), Association of Visually Impaired Students (AVIS) and Association for Students with Physical Impairment (ASPI). However, only two of these associations were active while I was at FUA. The NANDS is as old as the DSC in that they represent a cluster that was first admitted by FUA, based on the federal government's policy for university deaf education. This association has gained some traction within the university over time and has represented the interest of deaf students at the student union level, to the extent of being allocated a special constituency at the senate council of the student union. This means they can send a representative from the association to push their interests at the council level. With the addition of two more associations around disabilities, the senator now represents not only the deaf students on campus but all students with disabilities. AVIS was established in 2017, a year which FUA first received its highest number of VI students. These students came together and decided to create an association that would champion their interests and provide peer-to-peer support for admission, hostel accommodation and financial matters, as well as emotional support. In the excerpt below, Naomi describes how their association came about:

> "Initially, when I got here, there was no association…We that were on the ground decided that we should start an association. Already, the deaf have one, and the blind students do not. So we said, let's come up with an association, we have to start our processes from student affairs. We wrote letters and, most time, held our meetings there. We were trying to advocate for one thing or the other; we always have to go the students' affairs to see the dean or the subdeans."

While AVIS still competes with the legitimacy of the well-established NANDS, it is on a firmer footing than the Association for Students with Physical Impairment, which is even less visible. The leader of the PI cluster noted that, unlike students in the other two clusters, his peers do not come to the DSC for any support so it has been difficult to mobilise them to form a solid association that can demand equal recognition. As I highlighted in chapter 4, this category of students tends not to disclose their disability needs or come to the DSC for support because they do not need interpreters or need to scan learning materials, which constituted the two main components of the DSC provision.

However, all three associations do meet regularly with the DSC. There is some collaboration too. For example, International Day for People with Disabilities is coordinated and funded by the centre but allows input from the clusters and invite them to give reports on their experiences. During the event, guest speakers from within and outside the university are invited to raise awareness about disability inclusion. The DDACAD and DDADMIN both told me that it has been an opportunity to raise awareness about the "presence of students with disabilities on campus". In collaboration with the Student Union, they were also organising a sports event.

### 8.2.2. What has been fixed?

Student leaders of these associations have been confronted with the question of how to change the university for people coming behind them and to create more enabling spaces to participate. I witnessed several instances of this 'fixing' work which involved students writing to and meeting with stakeholders in the university who might be in a position to address their demands. Three examples of this are: the demand to pass a legislative bill to address mislabelling at the senate; introduce reasonable adjustments for admissions; and the provision of a resource person for the resource room. These three issues cut across all clusters and are at the heart of student access to and participation in, the university. I asked Naomi, who was an executive member of AVIS about the issues they have advocated for as an association:

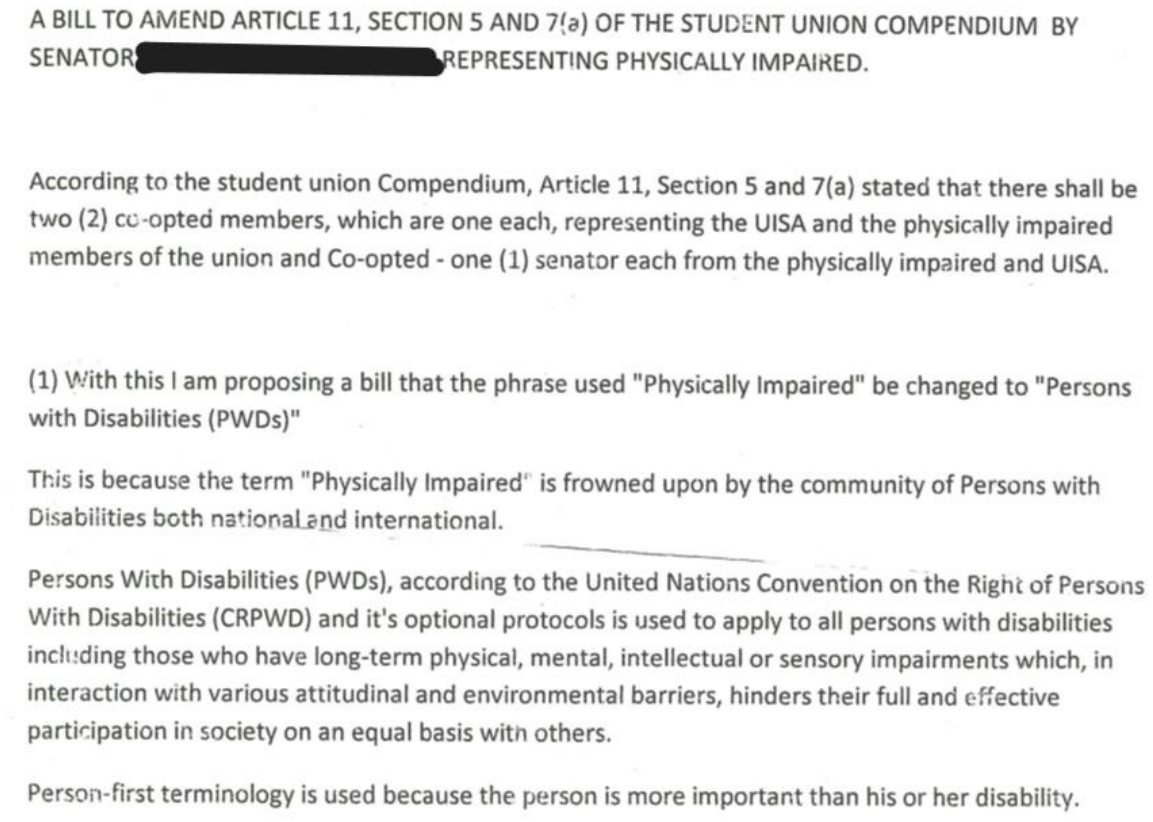
> "We advocated for, first of all, the preferential treatment of not queuing; we had to advocate for it. Okay, hostel, hostel allocation, before every other student, we had to advocate for it. Post-UTME waiver, we advocated for it. If you are able to meet up with the cut-off mark for the UTME, there is no need for post-UTME. It was like a stress. Getting admission easily through the association, we also help advocate for it. Those were just the basics. And also, a resource room too. I think we tried working around getting a resource room."

She went on to say that some of their requests were met at the university and national level, with the support of the staff advisers of their association, who guided them and supported them with the knowledge of how the system works and how to navigate it.

#### *Addressing Mislabelling*

The senator representing SWDs at the senate council invited me to attend a legislative sitting where he planned to present a bill to change the label of students with disabilities. According

to him, the current constitution labels them as "physically impaired students" which, by the National Policy on Inclusive Education, is an exclusionary term that fails to capture the heterogeneity of people with disabilities. Another issue was the demand by his constituency to increase the number of representatives to two people. This was a result of the demand of students with visual impairment who have never had a member of their association representing the constituency of disabled people. The senate council agreed to change the nomenclature of SWDs in the constitution but owing to the material constraints, down the request for two representatives**.** As seen in figure 8.1 below, he invoked national and international legislative frameworks to demand a name change. Figure 8.2 maps the sequential work and texts being activated at this level, with regards to fixing the mislabelling of SWDs at FUA.



A BILL TO AMEND ARTICLE 11, SECTION 5 AND 7(a) OF THE STUDENT UNION COMPENDIUM BY SENATOR [redacted] REPRESENTING PHYSICALLY IMPAIRED.

According to the student union Compendium, Article 11, Section 5 and 7(a) stated that there shall be two (2) co-opted members, which are one each, representing the UISA and the physically impaired members of the union and Co-opted - one (1) senator each from the physically impaired and UISA.

(1) With this I am proposing a bill that the phrase used "Physically Impaired" be changed to "Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)"

This is because the term "Physically Impaired" is frowned upon by the community of Persons with Disabilities both national and international.

Persons With Disabilities (PWDs), according to the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons With Disabilities (CRPWD) and it's optional protocols is used to apply to all persons with disabilities including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Person-first terminology is used because the person is more important than his or her disability.

*Figure 9: Legislative Bill to Address Mislabelling*

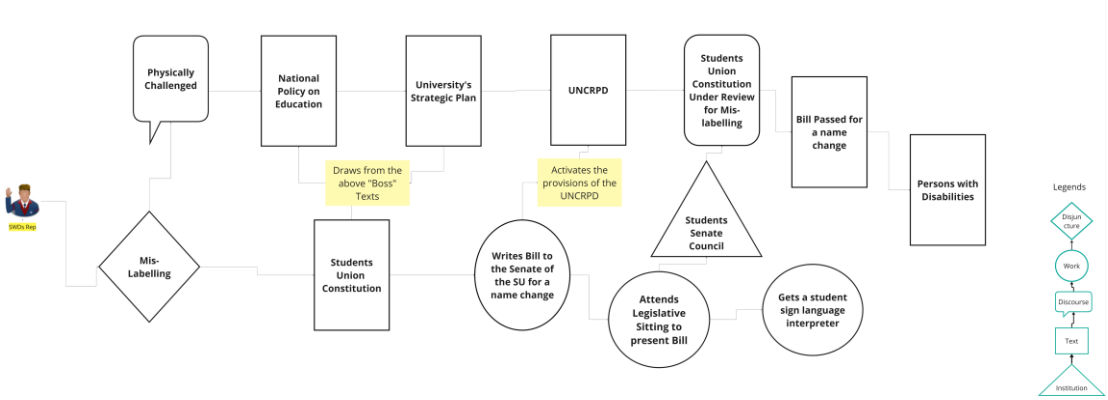



*Figure 10: Transformation Work to Address Mislabelling*

### ***Harvesting***

According to the DSC directors, the increase in the number of SWDs at FUA is due to the centre's efforts to develop a process they refer to as "harvesting." Harvesting, as described by the DDACAD, is a process whereby the centre collates the names of prospective SWDs through students already on campus and sends the list to the admission office. The names are then harvested from the pool of admission seekers for admission. In a "less-mechanised" institution like FUA, harvesting prospective students list is labour-intensive, and this work is done by the members of the association who want their peers to be admitted to higher education. While it depends on a who-you-know basis, students seeking admission to the university can also visit the centre and register their names with the DDACAD, who is in charge of the list. In the following excerpt, the DDACAD explains how this coordinated admission work is done and why it must be done.

> Abass: Can you tell me how you do the admission process?
>
> DDACAD: Well, the clusters of the students with disabilities, I mean the hearing impaired, the visually impaired, the physically challenged, you know they have connections among themselves. So when the admission process is on, they collect from their peers seeking admission. Actually, the JAMB will have sent the list of SWDs that apply for JAMB. They will have sent it to the admissions office, but we, too will now follow it up by collecting from those students. Writing on it, compiling the list and first submitting it to the vice chancellor, we submit it to the chairman of admissions, and we give notice to the admission officer. So we will give a copy to the vice chancellor for his approval. They will now send it to the admissions office. But sometimes we have a challenge with the admissions office because of they are not aware of some policies or maybe they have forgotten. Like not writing post-UTME. We

> have to inform them that these people are exempted from post-UTME. Because when they process the admission and see that a student doesn't have post-UTME, they will just drop it. These people are special; you do not need post UTME to give them admission. The policy directive came from the federal government."

The quote above establishes the idea that students' fixing work on campus is done in negotiation with those university stakeholders who are supportive of disability inclusion. They organise meetings to ensure that these students' voices are heard, through their associations. However, the associations have taken it upon themselves to initiate the process and then carry along the centre's leadership. The leaders told me that to gain legitimacy like other student associations on campus, they must seek more visibility and representation by spreading and mobilising admission seekers to pick FUA as their first choice.

Anthony's requests to be his mobility buddy were often so that he could go to the admission office to confirm certain requirements for prospective admission seekers. He also runs an initiative called Vision-Links. As the name implies, what he does is to be the "vineyard" of information for students with visual impairment seeking admission to FUA: he helps them in document verification, guides them with regards to course choice, and facilitates their arrival on campus for clearance and other necessary registration rituals, including hostel accommodation. He does this through a WhatsApp group he has created.

To further understand the impact of this association on students' admission journey, I asked Olutoyin, who benefits from this arrangement, about her decision to come to FUA:

> "Abass: Why did you choose this university?
>
> Olutoyin: I would say I chose it because of my JAMB score. FUA was my second choice.
>
> Abass: Were you aware the university has any provision for disabilities before choosing the university?
>
> Olutoyin: Yes, I knew through my friend Naomi. We were communicating even before I was admitted. I also had communications with the AVIS executives.
>
> Abass: How do you feel about being a member of AVIS?
>
> Olutoyin: I feel good about it.

Abass: How do you know about the scholarship you just applied for?

Olutoyin: Through the association for the visually impaired, AVIS. It was the general secretary who passed the message across."

When asked about his decision to pursue his degree at FUA, Sanni told me that he has always dreamt of studying in an inclusive school where priority is given to people with disabilities. And because FUA has a DSC, he became interested in FUA because he heard from his friends who were already on campus, that it had a support centre.

The struggle for "harvesting" does not end with admission; the clearance process described in chapter 6 usually falls to the association as they follow prospective students and meet with stakeholders who can help address their concerns regarding clearance. Patrick, for instance, described how he was referred to the association to help to address his admission concerns:

"I had to change to zoology, and when I changed to zoology, I was not given admission. So it has been late. My mother and I came to FUA. We went to the admission office to make enquiries. We were directed to the association which is the association of visually impaired students at the university. I got to them and from there, I was able to process my admission."

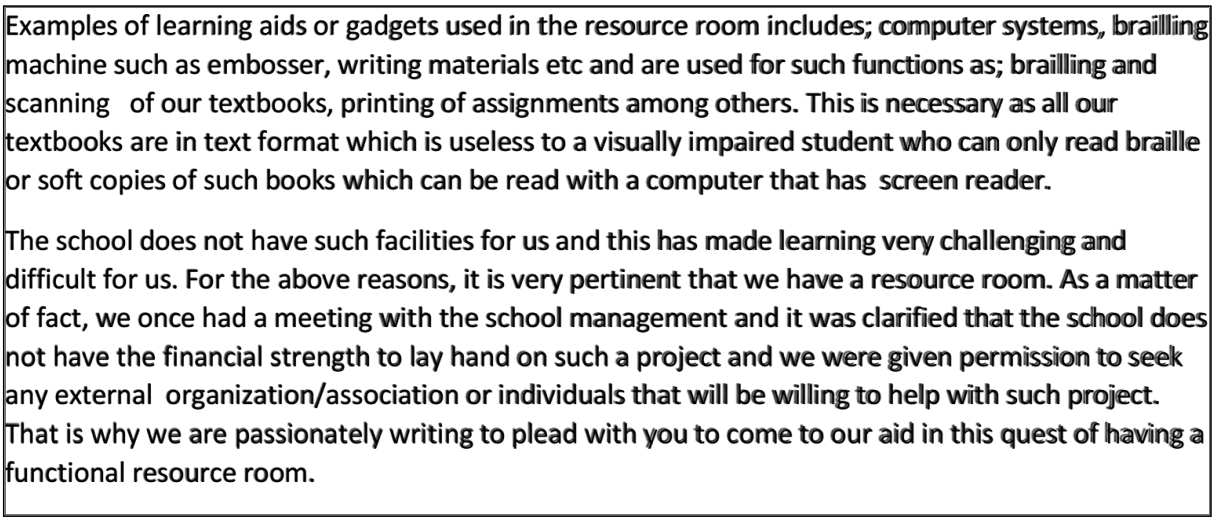
***Begging to Belong***

Another example of this fixing work is the students' demand to be allocated a resource room and a resource person. In the previous chapter, I discussed students' complaints about the university's failure to provide a resource room and person and the impact this had on their ability to obtain materials to study and prepare for exams. Throughout my stay at FUA, I observed that this was a major issue for visually impaired students (see also chapter 3). I decided to explore the fixing work that students were doing to get the management to see where they are coming from and what they need to be able to participate like their counterparts. I asked Anthony to describe some things he had had to negotiate, as a representative of his association. He recounted how the university had rejected their request for a resource room, stating that they could not afford it and suggested he should seek help elsewhere:

"One of these issues concerns getting a resource person for our resource room. We did not have a resource room when I came to this school in 2017. Having a visually impaired person in a school without a resource room is like sending a farmer to the farm without a hoe or cutlass. What do you expect him to work

> with? We approached the office of the deputy vice-chancellor then, we told her about the resource room, and she told us the school doesn't have the financial capacity to give us a resource room. She advised us that we can approach external bodies like NGOs and philanthropists and the likes."

Anthony shared one of these letters with me. In other words, they had to seek financial support for their inclusion, elsewhere. Yet the National Disability Act stipulates those institutions admitting SWDs, must provide the resources necessary to support their participation and inclusion.



Examples of learning aids or gadgets used in the resource room includes; computer systems, braillling machine such as embosser, writing materials etc and are used for such functions as; braillling and scanning of our textbooks, printing of assignments among others. This is necessary as all our textbooks are in text format which is useless to a visually impaired student who can only read braille or soft copies of such books which can be read with a computer that has screen reader.

The school does not have such facilities for us and this has made learning very challenging and difficult for us. For the above reasons, it is very pertinent that we have a resource room. As a matter of fact, we once had a meeting with the school management and it was clarified that the school does not have the financial strength to lay hand on such a project and we were given permission to seek any external organization/association or individuals that will be willing to help with such project. That is why we are passionately writing to plead with you to come to our aid in this quest of having a functional resource room.

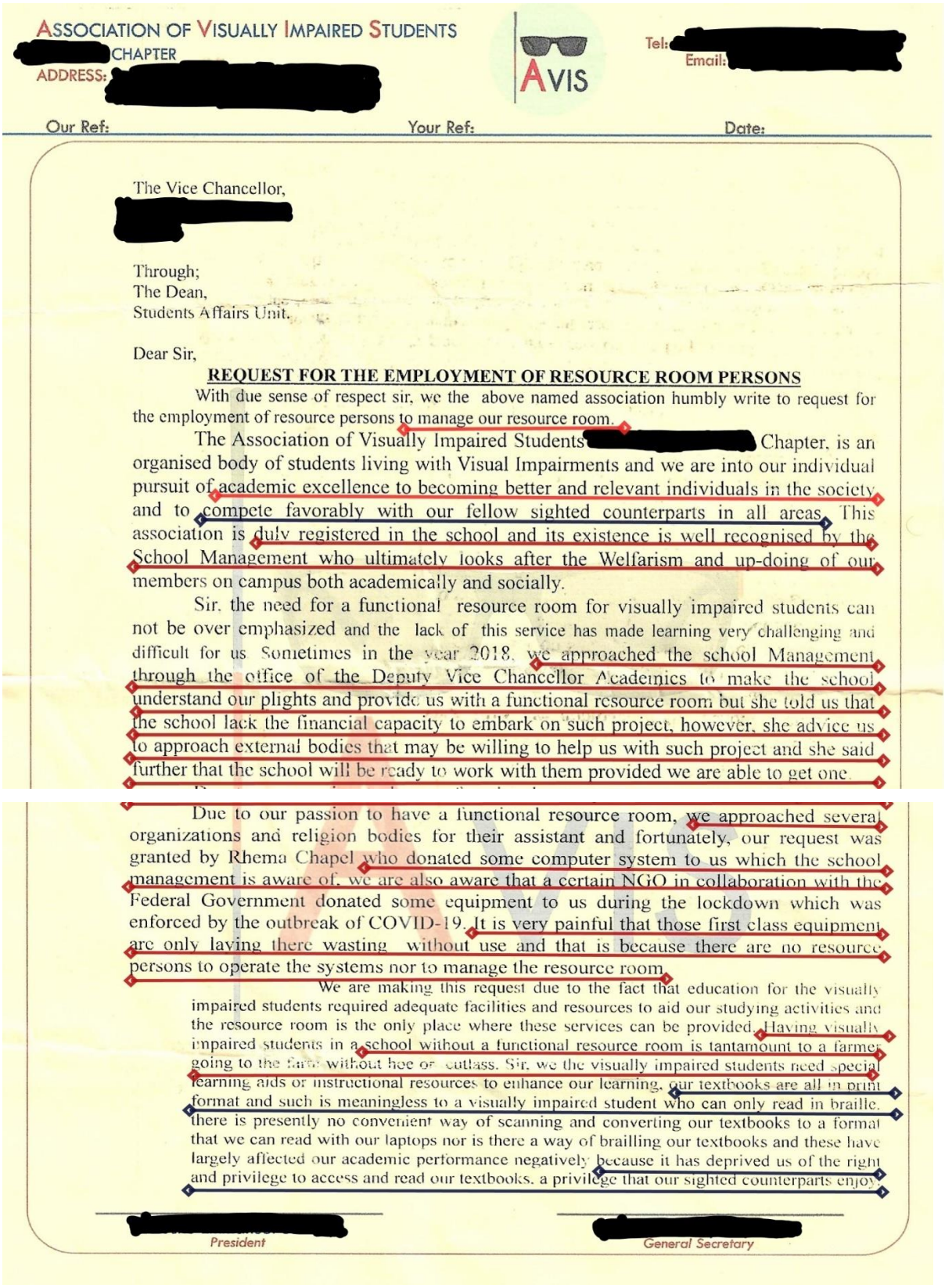
*Figure 11: A Sample Letter Written to Philanthropist*

The issue here is not just that students had to turn elsewhere for the resources that would enable them to participate at university, when that participation is their right. It could be argued that they were subjected to the dehumanising experience of what people with disabilities in Nigeria have been conditioned to do: beg. They were not begging for food, which is what so many people with disabilities are forced into in Nigeria. But they were begging on behalf of an institution that has failed in its responsibilities. Paradoxically, these students sought a university education because they did not want to end up as street beggars. The university due to its policy failure had effectively sent them out to beg for resources that would enable them to study. In this instance, a church "came to their rescue" and donated everything they needed to set up a resource room, including chairs and desks. They were also given a printer, scanner and computers. However, the fixing work was not over, as without a resource person, the

resource room was in effect inaccessible. To Anthony, this lack of provision is not about a lack of resources but a lack of will from the university to change its oppressive and ableist logic:

> "The resource room was settled, we now need somebody to manage the resource room. Someone to help us scan our textbooks and braille our materials. As we are in our association, we are not financially buoyant to employ the service of a resource person. So we met the school, and they told us the school is not recruiting and that there is an embargo on employment by the federal government. They are not able to employ a resource person for us. And we gave them the part-time option, and they said they would look into it. We have been on it for years now. It has not happened. That's really affecting us. We have always been trying and it is the same story."

On one occasion, Anthony asked me to take him to the Student Affairs Unit to drop a letter that they had written to the vice-chancellor. He said that the last one they wrote had been rejected because it was not written "through" the Student Affairs Unit. As I have mentioned, the SAU is in charge of managing student associations' communication in and out of the university. It has the prerogative to approve or reject any letter, especially those ones that might challenge the university's leadership. In this letter, the association is writing to remind the vice-chancellor of the "begging work" they have done and how the university management has failed to hold up to its side of the bargain, which was to provide a resource person to manage the resource room.



ASSOCIATION OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS
[redacted] CHAPTER
ADDRESS: [redacted]

AVIS

Tel: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Our Ref: Your Ref: Date:

The Vice Chancellor,
[redacted]

Through;
The Dean,
Students Affairs Unit.

Dear Sir,

**REQUEST FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF RESOURCE ROOM PERSONS**

With due sense of respect sir, we the above named association humbly write to request for the employment of resource persons to manage our resource room.

The Association of Visually Impaired Students [redacted] Chapter, is an organised body of students living with Visual Impairments and we are into our individual pursuit of academic excellence to becoming better and relevant individuals in the society and to compete favorably with our fellow sighted counterparts in all areas. This association is duly registered in the school and its existence is well recognised by the School Management who ultimately looks after the Welfarism and up-doing of our members on campus both academically and socially.

Sir, the need for a functional resource room for visually impaired students can not be over emphasized and the lack of this service has made learning very challenging and difficult for us. Sometimes in the year 2018, we approached the school Management through the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics to make the school understand our plights and provide us with a functional resource room but she told us that the school lack the financial capacity to embark on such project, however, she advice us to approach external bodies that may be willing to help us with such project and she said further that the school will be ready to work with them provided we are able to get one.

Due to our passion to have a functional resource room, we approached several organizations and religion bodies for their assistant and fortunately, our request was granted by Rhema Chapel who donated some computer system to us which the school management is aware of, we are also aware that a certain NGO in collaboration with the Federal Government donated some equipment to us during the lockdown which was enforced by the outbreak of COVID-19. It is very painful that those first class equipment are only laying there wasting without use and that is because there are no resource persons to operate the systems nor to manage the resource room.

We are making this request due to the fact that education for the visually impaired students required adequate facilities and resources to aid our studying activities and the resource room is the only place where these services can be provided. Having visually impaired students in a school without a functional resource room is tantamount to a farmer going to the farm without hoe or cutlass. Sir, we the visually impaired students need special learning aids or instructional resources to enhance our learning, our textbooks are all in print format and such is meaningless to a visually impaired student who can only read in braille. there is presently no convenient way of scanning and converting our textbooks to a format that we can read with our laptops nor is there a way of brailling our textbooks and these have largely affected our academic performance negatively because it has deprived us of the right and privilege to access and read our textbooks, a privilege that our sighted counterparts enjoy.

[redacted]
President

[redacted]
General Secretary

*Figure 12: A Sample of Letter Written to the Vice-Chancellor*

In this letter, the association's constant reference to "sighted counterparts" illustrates Smith's (1987) concept of "bifurcation of consciousness". Smith uses this term to refer to the separation or split between the world as an individual actually experiences it and the dominant view that an individual must adapt to (e.g., a masculine or ableist point of view). The notion of bifurcation of consciousness underscores that subordinate groups are conditioned to view the world from the perspective of the dominant group, since the perspective of the latter is embedded in the institutions and practices of that world; the dominant group, on the other hand, enjoys the privilege of remaining oblivious to the worldview of the Other.

The "governing mode" of an institution creates this bifurcation of consciousness: "it establishes two modes of knowing, experiencing, and acting—one located in the body and in the space that it occupies and moves into, the other passing beyond it" (Smith 1987, p 82). The concept, as used by Smith, is similar to Du Bois's (1903) concept of "double consciousness," which he used to describe the experience of black Americans. In both cases, the oppressed person must adapt to the "rules of the game" that do not reflect his or her interests or desires. Through this continuous accommodation in order to gain acceptance in a world that is not theirs, members of oppressed or minority groups become alienated from their "true" selves.

The next section describes another aspect of the fixing work SWDs take on, alongside their fight for equal participation.

### *Passing on the Baton of Burden*

SWDs expend enormous amounts of energy to get through their degree. Then there is the 'fixing work' that they do for themselves and others, to make the university more accessible to them. Given the relatively short period of time they themselves attend university, they do not always see the fruits of their labour. In a sense, they are also fighting for those who come after them. Those who join an association can only accomplish so much before they have to pass on the baton. I watched this process as it unfolds. I watched students organise elections even as they prepared for their exams. I saw them seeking out and encouraging those who come after them, to register their interest. But while I witnessed the feel-good factor these students enjoyed through their efforts to change the university and improve conditions for SWDs, this can also feel like a massive responsibility and even a burden. Leaders of these

associations described the daily struggle to balance these 'fixing' activities with academic demands and the daily "here and now" challenges of impairment. In the excerpt below, Naomi describes this juggling act:

> "Being the general secretary was not easy, I think it was most difficult. Because sometimes I have to leave my lectures, we have to go somewhere. We're trying to get a patron for the association. We were trying to register then. So sometimes, I leave lectures to make sure I pick up something or submit a letter. Get a stamp, meet so-so person, so-so person wants to see us. Sometimes I have to be in school till evening, even when I did not have any lectures. I have to be in school. It was quite challenging for me".

For Anthony, the most painful part of his experience as the leader of the association was knowing how little it would cost the university to fix things. At times, the refusal to engage on the part of the institution added to the humiliation that he was subjected to as a disabled person. He narrated how he was dismissed by some university stakeholders because they had no experience dealing with students with visual impairment:

> "It is not easy. Because as a responsible leader, you try to make things easy for your people. In trying to do that as the president of AVIS, I had to meet with different people in school, like staff and principal officers, trying to demand things that will make life easier for us. When you get to their office, they are not even there. They sometimes tell you the officer is not around even when they are in the office. I have been to a place before and the person said I should send somebody to come and speak on my behalf, and I said why? He said he had never related to a blind person before. I needed to tell my helper to go and relate with him on my behalf. At times, you go to the SAU or the VC office, you have to be there the whole day before you can meet the officers. By the time, you see them, the outcome is not always favourable. It was a very difficult task for me. It wasn't easy to pursue the interest of my people. I tried as much as possible to make things easy for them."

Anthony clearly worked under the most challenging conditions and was committed to being a good representative for "his people". As a torchbearer who had fought for the admission of students with visual impairment through his initiative, he then felt responsible for these students who, once admitted, were struggling to participate in university life.

Naomi described how she had been involved in developing AVIS into a formalised association that involved debate and elections:

> "The whole association thing started in 2017, so there was no election we were just a few, and we only shared responsibilities for everybody. I think five of us. We just shared responsibilities for everybody, but 2018 we started having more people. We started doing proper elections, what we do is we pick a date. We look for an independent body. We call some of our friends that are sighted, that are friends to the association. We just picked three or four of them to be the electoral committee, then we put just one of us to coordinate. Everybody, the people, the aspiring candidates or people aspiring for any position, they will all come. We do a debate. People could ask you questions with respect to the posts. And we then vote. The whole results come out immediately and a new council will emerge."

She went on to describe the responsibility she felt as a member of the outgoing executive, to set up a new one that would carry on the association's legacy. Figure 13 below seeks to capture the work student associations do, in addition to their studies, to fight for inclusion and participation that is ostensibly their right.

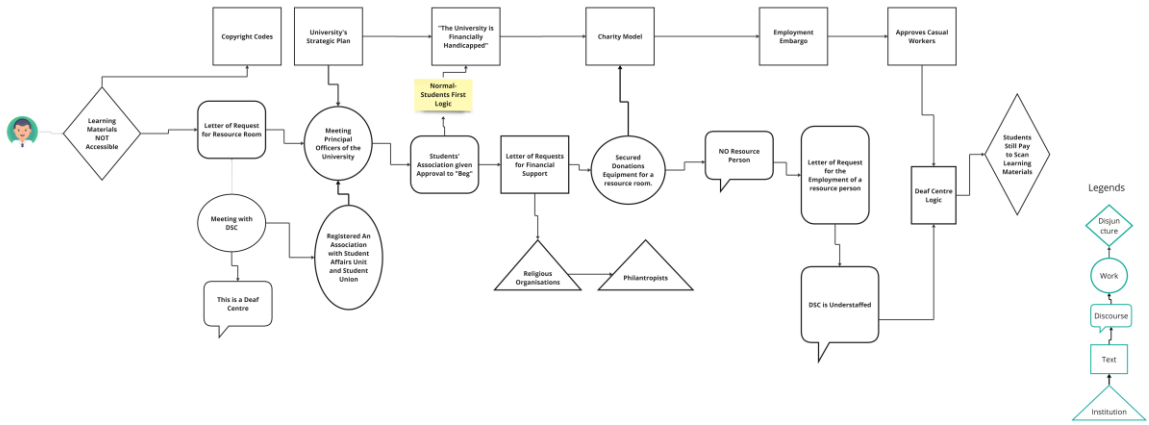



*Figure 13: Map of Transformation Work*

In addition to the fixing work that SWDs do within the university, their knowledge of how things are organised and the potential of their struggle, has widened the scope of their advocacy work to the wider FUA community and beyond. Sophia's comment about the need for everyone to be an "advocate" for disability inclusion, is particularly resonant of the theories and ideas underpinning this thesis. Like Anthony and Naomi, Sophia believes that the university structure itself is changing through the presence of students with disabilities. They must continue to give feedback to the government about the impact of policies and their implementation (and ineffective implementation) on student participation and well-being:

> "Yeah, I think everybody should be an advocate for disability. Because at the end of the day, whether we like it or not, disability is not planned. People do not sit down and add disability to their to-do list. I spoke with officers in the special protection unit in Lagos. I let them realise it might be them tomorrow because they could be deployed anywhere in the country. Do they think that if anyone of them gets a disability they should be abandoned? To a very large extent, they understood and the experience was good. I think outside academic stuff, that is what I do."

Not everyone is able to take on this advocacy role. Other SWDs have had to prioritise their own learning and participation in the classroom. Based on this understanding that students' actions bear a struggle against the ruling relations of disability inclusion policy in the Nigerian higher education, I decided to enact what Touraine refers to as "action sociology" to see how students could confront " the powers that be" and seek a path to a social evolution of change. Drawing on the theory of transforming action, the next section describes my own attempts to implement an intervention that would address this question.

### 8.3. A Sociology of Transformative Actions

The previous section showed how the micropolitics of social change is often an assemblage of resistance, instabilities, fragilities and fractures. In particular, it showed that students are conscious of the potential impact of their actions in terms of institutional change. According to Touraine (1981), this potentiality is one of the variables that actors need in building a social movement for change. In his thesis on the sociology of action, Touraine contended that society is composed not of structures from which individual behaviour is deduced (and sociology should not be limited to this) but of processes, of social relations and conflicts at various levels of articulation and with varying degrees of potential for historically significant action (Touraine, 1981). In reasserting the role of the sociologist, he argues that the sociologist must seek out these conflicts taking the form of collective struggle, judge their relative importance in relation to a theory of social evolution, and help in the realisation of any underlying potential.

Similar to the paradigm-shifting of institutional ethnography, Touraine suggests that we must understand that domination and repression are ideologically based on the dichotomisation of the system and the actors. To challenge this, the study of social relations must be "conceived as primarily created by social movements and linked with the permanent fight for freedom

and against non-social explanations and legitimisations of social order" (Ibid., p.13). In the process of conducting this research, my participants asked me what this study would do to change their daily experience. They were concerned about whether their participation in my fieldwork would "have any impact?". The task I set for myself as a sociologist in the field, seeking change in policy and practice, was to foster the process by which these students could realise the hypothesised potential of their struggles or social movement in Touraine's terms.

Sociological interventionists have applied Touraine's principle of creating an encounter between oppositions based on the contexts and issues under review. I used the three stages as described by (Touraine, 1981, McDonald, 2002) to facilitate a dialogic meeting between SWDs from all clusters to meet and discuss their challenges in sports participation with the key stakeholders (who I refer to as the interlocutors) in the university. These stakeholders included the directors of the Sports Unit, the Deaf Support Centre, the Nigerian Deaf Sports Federation, a professor of human kinetics who is also a former director of the Sports Unit and a senior programme officer of the Disability Law Advocacy project at FUA.

### *First Stage: Meeting with the Groups*

In the first stage, the research group discusses their action or shared social experiences. Although my participants came to this intervention with a shared struggle or experience, they did not necessarily form part of the same group. Intervention groups do not exist naturally, may be located outside of existing structures or networks and may not share a history of working together. For example, we later had students from other study sites joining in the conversation around disability sports at FUA. These students were perhaps not, strictly speaking, activists but as demonstrated in previous sections, they embodied the position of actors whose identity and opposition to the ableist regime at FUA had potential for societal change. At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that the research process does not bind them to implementing particular decisions (Cousin and Rui, 2011, McDonald, 2002).

During my fieldwork at FUA, I attended student association meetings where I observed and discussed many of the issues raised in this thesis. I believe I was often seen as someone well-positioned to speak to the university authorities on their behalf. In most cases, I tried to limit

their expectations in terms of what they hoped I could do. On the other hand, because my research was committed to empowering them, I made it my duty to inform them about what I learned or discovered during my interactions with FUA staff and their reactions and responses when I relayed SWD experiences to them. We then proposed organising what we called a "Thinkshop" around the participation of SWDs in sports, to create a space for dialogue on what the university needed to do. I had several meetings in person and online on the planning of the Thinkshop with the leaders of the three clusters of disabled students at FUA.

In sending letters of invitation to the interlocutors, I wrote in my role as a researcher working on disability inclusion in the university. An important factor considered in planning the Thinkshop was location: owing to the lack of baseline accessibility at FUA, we had to select a venue that everyone could access. This location was also methodologically vital, as researchers using sociological intervention suggest that the location must radically reduce the impact of the personality of the interlocutors on the group process (McDonald, 2002). In essence, students or actors must be comfortable in the space where the research process takes place or confrontations will ensue. To make it more profound, we decided to organise the event to coincide with International Day for Persons with Disabilities (3rd of December). This in itself I believe, reduced the impact of the personality of key stakeholders invited, as they were more likely to understand that they were being invited not to promote their own agendas but to discuss SWDs on this day of global awareness and advocacy for the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities. It was also a way of helping student actors to see how their work is globally connected and relevant.

***Second Stage: Meeting with Interlocutors***

This stage involves the research participants meeting with those actors within the organisation whose agenda or priorities may be in conflict with those of participants and who are in a position to impact their experiential reality. As described by McDonald, Touraine's intervention on the anti-nuclear movement meant that his two intervention groups met with a "series of interlocutors: representatives of trade unions, scientists, key bureaucrats making decisions about the nuclear energy program, communists, conservative and Green politicians,

and village-based defenders of a traditional way of life, as well as with members of the military forces" (McDonald, 2002, p. 252). Touraine argues that through reproducing relationships, the research process allows actors to reconstruct their "actual experience"—social relationships, conflicts and compromises—which allows researchers and participants alike to "discover the actor as actor and as a participant in the 'production of society'" (Touraine 2000, p. 911). As McDonald argues, these interactions can often be confronting and destabilising. This is because the ensuing relationship cannot be controlled by either the research participants or their interlocutor, nor the sociologists facilitating the dialogue. In my study, the student leaders became more connected in their articulation of the needs of individual clusters; in addition, this was the first time they had the opportunity to learn about the struggles of other disabled student associations on campus. This ultimately meant that students had to think more about many issues they do not necessarily understand.

In this Thinkshop, I facilitated a session where student leaders of hearing impaired, visually impaired and the sports secretary of the Students Union, were asked to speak about the barriers they face in sports and what it means in terms of belonging, as students of the university (Cousin and Rui, 2011). The leader of the visually impaired students described how throughout his four years on campus, he had never had any opportunity to participate in sports. The leader of the deaf cluster stated that "many deaf students in this institution are interested in participating in sports, but the problem is that we do not have enough interpreters." He recalled that as a fresh student, he had an interest in sports, but because they do not have enough interpreters, he and his peers were forced to prioritise their studies. He also pointed to the lack of capacity and encouragement for safe sports participation for deaf students on campus. The sports secretary of the Student Union agreed that as an umbrella body, the Student Union has not been able to incorporate disability sports into its programme, which he attributed to a "lack of resources and facilities to support their participation". He emphasised that they had proposed a programme to encourage disability sports, but that it had been disrupted by the ASUU strike and then curtailed by limited funding for the union's programmes. He remarked that this programme was urgently needed and promised that he would engage the next administration on how they can design programmes for disability sports in the university. The second session, also facilitated by me, had the immediate past and present directors of sports at the university, the President and Deputy Director of the Nigerian

Deaf Sports Federation, the Deaf Support Centre and a representative of the Disability Law Advocacy Project. As the interlocutors, they reflected on what the National Disability Act means to them in their daily work and the challenges in its implementation.

The President of the Deaf Sports Federation stated that the Act is a path to looking at how people with disabilities can contribute to the development of Nigeria, by giving them a voice through the law. He argued that SWDs have so much to contribute to the university and society, if given the necessary resources. The past director of the Sports Unit, representing the Vice-Chancellor, observed that, "this policy has established people with disabilities as a community of people to be recognised and respected. Because people used to see them as beggars. We do not reckon with them in society." She added,

> "By bringing up this law, people with disabilities are now seen as a major social system within the nation that must be respected. It has also established that the nation, or wherever they are situated, must take responsibility for its survival. It has also given people the platform to voice out for themselves, to defend themselves, to voice out, to raise advocacy, to create awareness, that awareness is a major one."

All interlocutors agreed on the need for collaboration between stakeholders to develop reliable data on persons with disabilities in Nigeria and the need to find ways to support their experience and participation in higher education through sports.

### *Third Stage: Self Analysis and the Intervention of the Researcher*

This stage is what sociological intervention researchers have described as the path to "permanent sociology", combining analysis and action (Touraine, 1981). In this stage of research, the researcher does not withdraw from the field to "analyse the data" and draw conclusions (McDonald, 2002). Rather, it is an opportunity to present the potentialities hypothesised during preparatory fieldwork and the intervention process, to the research group. The goal is to propose tools for the group to use in constructing an analysis of the interactions they have experienced, along with the broader questions of action and experience that arise from these interactions. In essence, these tools are not the creation of the sociologist but a product of the conflictual confrontations of the actors and the interlocutors.

In the case of the FUA research group, we then met again with key stakeholders of FUA surrounding disability sports and relayed the main points of action identified by the student leaders who attended the session. Some of the points raised are as follow.

> "Let there be a unit that will be in charge of sports for persons with disabilities and this unit could champion and an awareness programme for non-disabled students on the importance and how to include and integrate persons with disabilities in sports. There should be a kind of commitment from the school that annually there should be a sports programme for students with disabilities. Because I believe that non-disabled students have their own sports programmes annually, if they could have theirs, why can't we? We are also students, and since we pay the same amount in school fees, we should also be given that priority. There should be an annual sports league that includes both non-disabled students and students with disabilities. This will foster a kind of relationship between the two categories of students."

Before I left FUA, one issue raised throughout my fieldwork by the leaders of the deaf cluster, was finally addressed: the university approved the employment of additional interpreters as casual workers. Although student leaders had repeatedly made this request before my arrival, I was told by deputy directors that it was my research interactions with the key principal officers at FUA that had raised their awareness of the struggles that students face on campus due to the lack of interpreters and resource persons. While this is a step in the journey of FUA becoming an inclusive campus, the "casualisation of diversity work" (Ahmed, 2012) or inclusion, has remained one of the impediments to the institutionalisation of disability inclusion, as this results in discontinuity in terms of policy enactment.

## 8.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented students' struggles through their associations and student union to fix the university in terms of inclusion. Through a range of negotiations and actions, SWD leaders have been able to advance their interests within the enactment of disability inclusion policies at FUA. The impact of their actions is not confined to FUA alone but has had a spill-over effect on the national conversation around SWDs in HE. The use of Touraine's sociological intervention in this research has contribute to building this momentum both within and beyond FUA.

As with any theory, the decision to use Touraine's sociological intervention in this study has generated methodological consequences and challenges. The theory itself has been critiqued as historically deterministic and teleologically functionalist (Scott, 1991a). The assumptions that underpin my sociological intervention with FUA students are therefore open to criticism. I am aware that my role as a sociologist with the responsibility to "convert the consciousness of these actors" into action, is particularly problematic. A parallel theory is that interaction between those whose life world is being colonised by the logics of the system (Habermas, 1984) and those ideologically positioned in the system is sufficient to transform existing conflictual relations. This is not a notion I ascribe to. I do, however, see sociological intervention as developed by Touraine, as a useful methodological tool: firstly, to make sense of the emerging transformation work being done by disabled students at FUA and secondly, to support their work by empowering them with the knowledge of how disability inclusion policies situate them. It has also helped in addressing the transformative lacuna in institutional ethnography as a sociology for people: sociological intervention helps the sociologist answer the "what now?" question that the knowledge of the organisation of the social brings, after the ongoing ruling relations in an institution have been analysed.

Freire (1970) argued that pursuing a theory of transforming action, where there is a true commitment to the people which involves the transformation of the reality by which they are oppressed, one "cannot fail to assign the people a fundamental role in the transformation process (p. 99)." Among the focal points of this thesis, is how the knowledge of the social organisation of disability inclusion might contribute to the transformation of the institutional cultures of oppression and domination. In this sense, I align my work with Touraine's argument for a "permanent sociology" where analysis supports the action of the actors, or Augusto Boas's transformation of research participants from spectators to "spec-actors" and Paulo Freire's call for dialogue between the oppressed and the oppressors. All these arguments and approaches, underpinned by the notion that people can be empowered through a "sociology for them", have been further developed by Smith and other decolonial theories.

# Chapter 9. Discussion and Conclusion

## 9.1. Introduction

Conducting a study that is simultaneously policy-led and people-focused is quite a daring undertaking. This dual approach has been largely influenced by the way I see policy as text, discourse and process. It is also attributable to the ontologies underpinning my theoretical framework, where primacy is given to the people's actualities by paying attention to how texts coordinate them. Smith (2005) noted that the textual dimension of IE is inseparable from the accounts of people's work, based on the working knowledge that we create together with our informants. In this case, "texts do not become a focus in and of themselves but as activated in people's work process" (p. 170). The explication of this work process has enabled the "institutional observability" (ibid, p. 170) of disability inclusion at FUA. In this chapter, I revisit some of the contrapuntal voices presented in the last five chapters to address my research questions. I conclude by reflecting on my key contributions to knowledge and the limitations of this study.

## 9.2. Revisiting the Contrapuntal Voices

### *Policy stickiness and dependencies*

The current state of inclusive education in Nigeria encompasses three broad categories: People with Disabilities, Children/Youth at Risk, and Gifted and Talented Children/Youth. This system of categorisation has created challenges for inclusive education policies in practice, as there is a gap between policy intentions and actual implementation: it is a system that provides special needs education within mainstream systems on the one hand and segregation on the other. A phenomenon that describes this process is "policy stickiness"(Van Buuren et al., 2016). The analysis of the policy texts suggests that there is a persistence of historical patterns and practices that hinder the full realisation of inclusive education policies, resulting in policy stickiness. This reflects a challenge in shifting from older, exclusionary systems to more inclusive ones.

In chapter 4, I addressed the first research question by exploring how the meanings of inclusion, inclusive education, and disability are represented in policy texts and how these concepts impact the social practice of disability inclusion in Nigerian universities. I analysed three key policy texts: the National Policy on Education (2013), National Policy on Special Needs Education (2016), and National Policy on Inclusive Education (2017). I used a textual analysis reading frame to examine the context, text, post-text, and ensuing contexts of these policy texts. I also explored the 1969 National Curriculum Conference and its role in shaping the National Policy on Education. The conference's focus on national unity, citizenship, national consciousness and nation-building, explains how education was seen as an instrument for national development.

The review of the National Policy on Education (NPE) since its inception in 1977, highlights the intertextuality of the NPE, how it draws from other high-order texts, and the categorical othering of students to be served by the system, where some are deemed as "normal" and the othered as "deviant," particularly in terms of students with disabilities. I map how differing discourses of disability, needs and inclusion compete within the domain of inclusive education policies in Nigeria. These discourses as represented in official texts, denote 'official meanings of disability inclusion' which are disconnected from the understanding and knowledge of disability in the social practice. I propose that this "order of discourse" (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2010) impacts policy processes and delimits the possibility for change.

As such, institutions are entrapped in the path already set by past discourses and histories. These past policies and colonial influences have significantly shaped the education trajectory in Nigeria, especially higher education. I have argued that the primary goal of higher education for national economic development, may have contributed to the exclusion of individuals with disabilities. I also indicated that changes in educational policies in Nigeria, such as the National Policy on Education and the National Policy on Special Needs Education and the evolving terminology used for individuals with disabilities, shifting from "handicapped" to "persons with special needs" have been diffused through a "policy epidemic" granted by the global governance of education (Ball, 2017).

I adopted an institutional gaze on the development of policies at both local and extra-local levels, starting from UNESCO's championing of the extra-local relations of the 'education for

all' agenda and 'inclusive education' policy. I illustrated this by showing how the organisational units in charge of general and inclusive education in Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Education, have had similar trajectories to UNESCO's. This institutional gaze explains the socio-historical and political untidiness (Ball et al., 2011) of the development of inclusive education systems and policies, and why they carry certain ideological relics of past and current global relations.

As Tomlinson (2017) has argued, the historical development of special and inclusive education, in the UK for instance, has only succeeded in creating parallel systems for the so-called "normal" children and "the unprofitable, educationally difficult and the disruptive" (p.31) yet maintaining the paradox of "keeping the costs of educating them low as well as making them productive to the economy" (p. 33). This argument about path-dependencies and emergences has also been made in the case of South Africa (Walton and Engelbrecht (2022) and Russia (Kalinnikova Magnusson and Walton, 2021). In the Nigerian context, I also contend that the discourse of "global best practices" as seen in these national policy texts analysed in chapter 4, is misleading and obscuring the messiness of managing educational exclusions as the aim of these policies appears only to align with international trends, even when local implementation is lacking or challenging.

I extended this dependency thesis by illustrating how this policy stickiness affects social practice, by shifting my attention to the Deaf Support Centre at FUA, which was initially created in 1990 to address the exclusion of students with hearing impairments. Over time, the centre started providing support to various categories of students with disabilities. However, there is a disconnect between the centre's name and the services it provides. Students with disabilities at FUA feel that the centre's name limits its scope and that they should be more inclusive. This disconnection has raised concerns about the university's commitment to serving the needs of SWDs challenged by students' changing identities and new understanding regarding disability rights. This research reveals that, the change of name is not the immediate problem for the centre but the lack of will by FUA's leadership to respond to the needs of new categories of students entering the university.

While this extension highlights the need for institutional change as a response to this demand, the analysis reveals that the process of institutional change regarding disability inclusion is complex. Policies may evolve, expanding the scope of their inclusivity, but institutions like

universities may struggle to keep pace with these changes, due to limited resources and entrenched practices, indicating a gap between policy intentions and institutional practice.

***Contexts subsume texts***

Chapter 5 addressed the second element of research question one by looking at how the objectives and intentions of the key national policy texts for disability inclusion (analysed in chapter 4) are interpreted and then translated into institutional strategies, thoughts and practices. Using a range of texts, observations and interviews to make sense of the under-world of the policy enactment, I took a closer look at the impact of discursive representation of disability and inclusion in policy texts on the organisation of disability inclusion practices at FUA. Using Ball et al. (2012) framework for examining policy contexts, I compared the interpretive and translative work at FUA with two other universities in the same geographical area but with different mission statements and ownership structures. This comparison lends credence to disparate interpretations of texts, based on institutional histories, leadership and resources. While chapter 4 draws on a number of texts produced by the government to understand the state of things, there is no clear or specific policy text(s) that addresses the inclusion of SWDs in higher education. Universities in this study have only responded to the general discourse of inclusive education, based on the implication that every student must be given access and allowed to participate in higher education.

This means that institutions do not only subsume texts or rules through practice (Glynos and Howarth, 2007), they also invent the existence of certain texts to sustain their logics of practice. This has also led to a problem of institutional capture, where experiences and actualities are supplanted by institutional discourse or ideological knowing (Smith, 2005). This lack of policy direction has emerged into a variegated coordination of policy enactment across the three universities. While this study did not set out as a "comparative" study, having an extended exploration of policy translation beyond FUA has enriched the study. Private and state universities, due to their sizes and administrative structures amidst other factors, present unique contexts of non-state provisions of higher education and divergent institutionalisation of national policies. As the oldest university in the region, FUA seems to have a more robust interpretation of the intentions of the policy texts analysed in chapter 4. The university is also owned by the federal government, enabling it to enjoy the patronage of government initiatives for disability inclusion, such as the establishment of the Deaf Support Centre and accessibility

audits and interventions carried out at the Faculty of Education in the university. Even with this background, there is still a significant gap in the university's investment in responding to the imminent diversity on its campus.

As a state university, KSU has combined a corporatised and social institutional logic as "a university for community development". However, it does not appear to have a clear grip on its institutional strategy for disability inclusion. While it is consciously integrating SWDs in its specialist education course, it remains a second-choice university for SWDs who are primarily from low-income families. APU demonstrates "policy ad-hocism" within the entrepreneurial and managerial logics: services are only provided when disability registers on the admissions radar. This "whac-a-mole approach" (Gabel and Miskovic, 2014)has been used to contain and maintain a consistent number of one student per interpreter per academic year, as it only admits one disabled student with hearing impairment a year. Ball et al. (2012) explain that context(s) could be the backdrop where schools operate; it is an approach that also leads to a pattern of emphasis and de-emphasis, in the sense of choice of specialism, intake and university culture.

### *Unequal Opportunity Regimes*

The second research question at the heart of the thesis concerns the working relations that go into the enactment of disability inclusion policies at FUA: "the doings of policy enactment which is primarily a translative work" (Ball et al, 2012, p. 46). Through analysis of interviews and observations, I mapped how these working relations are organised. My work challenges the totalitarian idea that only "schools do policy" work (Ball et al., 2012) or that diversity work is done by professionals alone (Ahmed, 2012). My deployment of IE as a framework recentres the question of who is actually "doing the policy work". I conceptualised work by drawing on the notions of *policy work* (Ball et al., 2012), mothering *work* (Griffith and Smith, 2004) and *diversity work* (Ahmed, 2012 ) to challenge the assumption that policy enactment is only within the purview of the agents "responsibilised" by policy documents or discourses.

The focus of this study on the actualities beyond institutional discourse, have revealed a shift in this responsibilisation logic (Craske, 2020): I have shown how SWDs are not only "working" their own access and participation, they are also working to transform the university. I

illustrated this by mapping the students' journey from their previous educational institutions through to them being admitted as FUA students. Their daily and nightly experiences through this process is what I called the *access work,* one of the three levels of work being done by SWDs in the enactment of disability inclusion policies at FUA. I framed this access work in an obvious policy term to further challenge the assumptions that universities are there to provide access to education. As this study has revealed, Nigeria's higher education system in its current form does not enable easy access of students with disabilities. As a result, SWDs must engage in extra layers of work simply to get through a door that is supposedly open.

As I have shown in this study, this access work can take many forms, shaped by features and circumstances that determine the decisions and destinations of students as they interact with the gatekeeping policies of the university. I divided this access work into three stages, namely pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal access work. While it is very difficult to pinpoint exactly where a particular stage begins or ends, the composite accounts of three students shed light on the trajectories of students as they prepare to go to the university. Pre-liminal access work highlights the complex journeys these students undertake due to the intersection of factors such as the nature and onset of their impairments, available support, family dynamics, educational policies and poverty. I also address the challenges and discrimination they face on this journey, emphasising the unique struggles faced by SWDs in accessing higher education and how this journey is textually mediated and coordinated by national policies on education. These experiences illustrate the unique struggles and extra work SWDs do in their pursuit of higher education or a return to higher education. Most importantly for IE research, is how these works by SWDs are coordinated and shaped by the lack of implementation of the key policy texts relating to the disability experience.

The liminal access work refers to the efforts and challenges SWDs encounter during their transition from secondary to higher education. It describes a condition of being between two distinct educational stages: completing secondary school and going to the university. The boundaries between them can be blurred as completion of secondary school does not guarantee a university place; and there is a high degree of uncertainty around admission. For SWDs seeking admission, this can be experienced as a period of transformation and change, but also ambiguity about their future in higher education, punctuated by policy initiatives and practices aimed at increasing access to higher education for these students.

I identified the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB), the unified tertiary matriculation examinations, as a particularly important body with regards to this stage. I traced the evolution of JAMB's role in chapter 5, which has shifted from a focus on conducting examinations to becoming involved in the entire admission process, thus influencing the trajectory of students' higher education journeys. A significant shift has been the transition from pen and paper exams to computer-based tests (CBT) to enhance the examination process. However, these advancements have not substantially benefitted students with disabilities, particularly those with visual impairments who have faced historical exclusion. In response to these disparities, the JAMB Equal Opportunity Group (JEOG) was established in 2017 to address admission challenges faced by students with disabilities. The JEOG has primarily concentrated on accommodating visually impaired students, which has resulted in higher admission rates for visually impaired students. However, challenges persist; in particular, the examination process remains contentious. The practice of professors reading the examination questions aloud to visually impaired students is described as outdated and limiting, having the opposite effect of inclusive policies.

I argue that it is in the post-liminal access work that Bourdieu's symbolic violence is set in motion. Symbolic violence is a subtle but powerful mechanism by which the dominant class establishes and maintains its social and cultural supremacy, influencing people's behaviour, beliefs, and values, without necessarily resorting to physical force. Those who conform to these norms are rewarded, while those who do not, face social, economic, or educational disadvantages (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Gunter (2023) takes the idea of symbolic violence further, arguing that education reforms or policy initiatives themselves can become sites of *policy violence,* where relational, political and social power is used to benefit from knowledge production as a means of codifying and delivering an unmodern modernised education system. Gunther draws on Smith's enunciation of ruling relations through texts and ideology (Gunter, 2023) to argue that policy violence can become "legitimised, authorised, and intelligible, and as such it is located within and dependent upon the recognition of vantage points by and for policy actors" (Ibid, p 65).

My analysis of the post-liminal access work of SWDs in higher education examines the institutional process of being "cleared" for their courses and how this step can impact their

educational journey. The registration and institutional processes that SWDs must navigate, the challenges they encounter, and the subsequent organisation of their lives and ambitions can be viewed through the lens of symbolic violence in that these students come to see themselves as a problematic category. This process involves institutional screening, which can sometimes lead to students being redirected to courses deemed less demanding. These institutional logics are what Gunter (2023) refers to as vantage points or organisational locations for decision-making. These vantage points legitimise modernisation (as in the production of "modern" bodies), authorised through governing by knowledge production or data production. They are sites of intelligent knowledgeability that weaponise, calculate, and enact what needs to be known as worth knowing in order to frame and deliver vital reforms. The registration process at FUA serves as a legitimised location for the unequal distribution of SWDs across different faculties, as students are being cleared to courses that the university deems manageable or that require less reasonable adjustments on the part of the institution.

Even with the discriminative clearing of most SWDs to the Faculty of Education, "cultural intermediaries,"(Bourdieu, 1984), non-disabled students, help their disabled peers navigate the university culture. Due to a lack of support from the university, they have become pivotal in the integration of SWDs at FUA, particularly because SWDs often start their course late due to needing time to adapt to their new environment. Forming this relationship of dependency involves consciously working on themselves to be "friendly and assist-able". Not being open and friendly is not optional for SWDs: the help of their peers determines the degree to which they will be able to access the curriculum and participate actively in university life.

### *This Space is not Built for People Like Us*

Research question two which focused on the working relation of disability inclusion enactment was further addressed by looking at the work that goes into the participation of SWDs at FUA, what I call "participation work". I examine the granularities of this work, the energy SWDs use as a result of trying to participate in a space that is not built for them. I mapped how students' work to participate is connected and coordinated by FUA accommodation and transportation policies. SWDs encounter a complex web of challenges, which they traverse by adopting a range of strategies. Their efforts to integrate into the university culture are characterised by various forms of extra work and resourcefulness.

A key aspect involves accessing learning materials. A significant portion of the curriculum lacks readily accessible content, such as braille or digital versions. Thus, students with visual impairments have to curate their own materials (see section 7.6). To address this, students take it upon themselves to scan printed materials, either at personal expense or through the assistance of friends who read aloud as they type. The lack of resource persons and the absence of university-wide policy support for accessible materials, leave SWDs in a state of dependency as they must take on the additional work of converting materials into a usable format. This often leaves insufficient time or energy for the preparation and studying itself. When I raised the lack of access to learning materials with the VC of FUA, I learned that the university had an ongoing campaign to discourage lecturers from selling handouts or books to students but it's been unsuccessful. The background to this, however, is that most of the texts recommended by lecturers are not available in sufficient numbers in the library to go around so students are then forced to buy texts or handouts from lecturers. While this campaign by FUA's management doesn't help the students in anyway, students with visual impairments are then doubly disadvantaged because they have to buy the texts and then have to convert them to readable formats, due to the "copyright code" that lecturers at FUA often invoke where SWDS ask for soft-copies of the textbooks.

If getting material to study is a laborious undertaking for SWDs, finding a suitable space to study is even harder. The university library's operating hours do not align with students' study needs so night classes (see chapter 7) have become an essential part of SWDs' academic routine, providing a quiet environment that is conducive to studying even though some of them have reported unpleasant experiences of going for night classes. For many SWDs, these spaces also serve as a place for mutual support. The assessment culture at FUA takes cue from the JEOG's method of conducting the university entrance examinations, SWDs are provided with various forms of assistance to accommodate their unique needs. Support is delivered through the role-shifting status of sign-language interpreters who also act as notetakers and readers during examinations. For visually impaired students, invigilators are sometimes responsible for reading out exam questions, and extra time is allocated to account for the time required for this. In computer-based tests, where accessible software like JAWS is not available, exam questions are read aloud by staff from the DSC. This method is not without

its shortcomings, as it necessitates more time and can be less efficient than independent exam-taking methods. Moreover, it deprives SWDs of any autonomy.

In short, the university's disability inclusion policies appear to be loosely implemented and communicated. While some lecturers and staff are supportive, there are inconsistencies in terms of making adaptations for students with disabilities. Additionally, the policies often treat all disabilities the same, thereby overlooking the specific needs of students within each disability cluster. SWDs then have to negotiate in an ad hoc fashion for appropriate adaptations to be put in place. Moreover, the absence of proper training for academic staff and departments, results in a lack of awareness and proactive support for students with disabilities, compounding the difficulties they already encounter while pursuing higher education. During my fieldwork, my impression was that lecturers at FUA enjoy a significant degree of autonomy in designing and delivering their courses, which can result in a tendency to reschedule or cancel classes on short notice. As my data has shown (e.g. see chapter 7.4), this unstructured approach to scheduling can have a negative impact on the plans of students with disabilities, potentially limiting their opportunities to fully participate.

The experiences of students in the virtual classes introduced by FUA during the pandemic reveal the fitting work that SWDs do in both governed and ungoverned digital spaces. I have argued (see chapter 7.5) that although the technologisation of the learning process can enhance access, it can also become a conduit for policy and epistemic violence. This unintentional emergence of the role of technology in shaping the everyday life of SWDs, speaks to the need for a holistic approach to designing inclusion policies through and with technologies. This is why institutions of learning must learn to "read inclusion divergently beyond the humanist orientation" (Naraian, 2020) by looking at how other matters matter in enacting educational policies. Chapters 6 and 7 have shown that the exclusive centring on human agency to deliver inclusion has somewhat obstructed efforts towards making the system accessible and humane.

### *Towards an Omoluabi Inclusion Framework*

In chapter 2, I broached the current debates on how some African communitarian philosophies are used in decolonising inclusive education in Africa. I also noted that Grech (2012) and Imafidon (2021) remind us, while community can be a source of succour when institutional support is lacking, it can also be a source of discrimination for people with

disabilities. Disabled people suffer ontological invalidation as a result of the narrow sense of communitarian philosophy that underpins concepts like Ubuntu and Omoluabi.

However, my study has shown in chapter 7 that non-disabled students are indirectly caught up in the disjuncture that exists in the organisation of disability inclusion policies at FUA. Due to "policy mortality" (Gunter, 2023), non-disabled students become aware of the deficiencies in the system and sometimes take on roles as study or mobility buddies, helpers, and advocates for their peers with disabilities. Although the primary focus of my thesis is the experience of SWDs, I was curious to understand why non-disabled students at FUA seemed to embrace these roles so fully, despite the demands university education makes on their time and energy. Following other researchers who have looked at what African philosophies could mean for inclusive education (Mutanga, 2023, Mbazzi, 2023, Shanyanana and Waghid, 2016a, Letseka, 2012), I have also looked at this 'volunteering for inclusion' from the Omoluabi and Ibn Khaldun's Asabiyyah (social solidarity) philosophical lenses elsewhere (Isiaka, 2023). This is in response to Santos' call for a development of southern epistemologies that require "alternative thinking of alternatives" (Santos, 2016). I explored in that work the situational application of Iwà as the unwritten constitution for the everyday running of both public and private affairs of the Yorùbá communities. Iwa or Omoluabi is the moral yardstick by which the Yoruba people measure a person: everyone has a set of ideals to follow at home, at work, in school, and in any relationship, even in simple actions such as greetings (Falola & Afolayan, 2017).

This 'Omoluabi Inclusion Framework' (which needs further development) offers a new way of thinking about the attitudes of students and staff towards disability inclusion, especially in contexts where adequate resources are lacking. Inviting higher education institutions to dig into the philosophical traditions of their host communities and see how they can sustain inclusion and equity through mutual support and communal belonging, might be very difficult in the sense of a "federal" university like FUA. However, an inclusive culture must then be cultivated where every member of the university community, both staff and students, will see beyond impairments and economic usefulness and how the being of SWDs is connected to their own beings.

As related to me by these students, their relational understandings of disability began at home before their interactions with students with visual and hearing impairments in an educational context. This early relational understanding actuated an awareness of the need for a 'working' classroom atmosphere where no student has to face any barriers to learning. The volunteers or helpers I met displayed this sense of social solidarity (Asabiyyah) with their peers, who lacked the necessary support to participate in class. These students supported the idea of inclusive education in both philosophy and pedagogical practice and were also vocal about what they saw as discrimination, due to institutional neglect and lack of resources for their disabled peers.

The role of non-disabled students in carrying out unpaid work to support the inclusion of their counterparts, is in line with the studies referred to in chapter 2 describing the responsibility embraced in African communities, for caring for the needs of the poor, including the disabled, before the advent of colonialism. Colonial observers in the 1940s could, therefore, have been right in their observation that African societies have deeply entrenched traditions of providing basic support for disabled people (Grischow, 2018).

### *On the Question of Transformation*

As national and institutional strategies are oriented towards the economic role of producing 'able-bodied' graduates for the labour market, the experience of SWDs remains precarious despite policies that address exclusion. This orientation draws on the colonial and capitalist economic development rationales that are predicated on the expansion of higher education system in Nigeria, like most countries in Africa. As universities founded and funded by the state, these colonial and market logics continue to shape the inclusion policies and the day-to-day experience of SWDs in higher education.

This background situates the transformation thesis within the ruling relation discourse of "de-linking" the university from its colonial and capitalist origins, to use Mignolo's phrase (2007). Mignolo describes delinking as the;

> "de-colonial epistemic shift that brings to the foreground other epistemologies…other economy, other politics, other ethics. It presupposes a move towards a geo- and body politics of knowledge that denounces the pretended universality of a particular ethnicity (body politics), located in a

> specific part of the planet (geo-politics), that is, Europe where capitalism is accumulated as a consequence of colonialism" (Mignolo 2007 p. 453).

This de-linking is seen in the everyday resistance of SWDs against the exclusionary and totalitarian capitalist logics that permeate the policies and practices of disability inclusion at FUA. Their university presence and quotidian demands for change have seen the building of more accessible infrastructure, with the first accessible toilet being piloted by the National Commission for People with Disabilities after an accessibility audit. The leadership of FUA has also approved the employment of more sign language interpreters, even though the role of the resource person is still writ large and unattended. The sociological intervention introduced by this study was also meant to amplify the transformation work that SWDs have been doing textually, viscerally, and politically.

To further understand how much impact the work (including access, participation and transformation works) of these students has generated, JAMB has taken a policy leadership to organise what it calls the first National Conference on Equal Opportunity of Access to Higher Education in Nigeria between 25th and 26th September 2023 in Abuja. I was able to join this conference and contributed remotely. While the conference gave reflexive accounts of what the JEOG has been able to do in terms of admission of SWDs since 2017, it acknowledged that admission rates have remained dismal and that students who *are* admitted, do not receive the kind of help or attention that they deserve to pursue a university education. It was noted at the conference that "some tertiary institutions make no concerted efforts to admit qualified candidates with Special Needs while a few others actually go all the way not only to admit them, but also try their best to address the peculiar needs of many of such students" (JAMB, 2023 p. 31). The launch of the first national "Strategic Roadmap for Inclusive Access to Quality Higher Education in Nigeria (2024-2028)" gives some hope about the future of inclusive education in Nigeria. This roadmap, while it requires further deconstruction beyond authorial intentions, provides a blueprint for creating an enabling environment and strengthening support systems for students with disabilities. However, one of the metrics for successful implementation is for Nigeria "to be ranked among the top five in Africa and top 20 countries in the world for successful implementation of inclusive education" (JAMB 2023, p.10). This kind of discourse reinforces the capitalist logic that has excluded SWDs from higher education in the last decades.

## 9.3. Key Contributions to Knowledge

This thesis contributes to the existing body of knowledge about higher education, inclusive education, institutional ethnography, decoloniality and critical policy sociology, by providing a rich, qualitative exploration of the experiences of students with disabilities. It sheds light on the practical challenges face and adaptations these students make, offering insights that can inform policy improvements and the development of more inclusive practices in higher education. The following highlights some of the key contributions of this study.

### *Voices from the Hinterland*

Chapter 2 reviewed the current state of knowledge about disabilities. It argued that the knowledge base regarding inclusive education is still very rooted in the Global North perspective. It concluded that more critical voices are needed to pluriversalise our current knowing and doing of disability and inclusive education research. While this study contributes to our understanding of disability inclusion from the periphery, it also illustrates the totalising impact of global charters on the lived experiences of SWDs in Nigeria and elsewhere. It shows how extra-local relations of the global governance of education policies create particular forms of ruling relations and domination of the thinking and doing of disability at the local level. Insight into the actualities of SWDs expands our understanding of the obstacles these students encounter in their pursuit of higher education. It also extends Deveau's argument that there is a distinction between ideological knowledge of disability and experiential knowledge of disability (Deveau, 2016). This study reveals that most of the prescriptions of the policy texts analysed fail to account for these actualities.

### *Inclusive Higher Education*

Most studies in Nigeria have only looked at disability from the narrow perspectives of institutional infrastructure and resources. By focusing on SWDs in a higher education setting, this work bridges the gap between inclusive education at the primary and secondary levels and inclusive practices in higher education in Nigeria, by seeing students' journey through these levels as connected and concerted. This contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the educational journey of individuals with disabilities. By exploring how inclusive education policies are translated into practice in the context of Nigerian universities, I highlight the complexities and challenges faced in achieving genuine inclusion for students with disabilities.

The study confirms that inclusive education is not simply a policy matter; it involves complex issues related to resource allocation, institutional change, academic cultures and attitudes, that affect its practical implementation. By examining policy enactment "behind the scenes" of a university, I was able to highlight the disjuncture between stated policies and their actual execution, offering valuable insights into how policies impact the daily experiences of students with disabilities. I also took a critical approach to policy by analysing how the sociopolitical factors that shape the development and implementation of inclusive education policies, are organised. By emphasising the influence of international conventions, government agendas, and changing social attitudes on policy discourse and practice as the colonial matrix of power shaping the actualities of SWDs in practice, I have been able to demonstrate that policies have histories, and that this history can be symbolically violent, based on how they are used or translated by institutions like FUA. As such, context can also be colonial, a theme that needs further exploration in the field of "critical" policy sociology.

### *A Return to the Micro*

The study provides insights into the challenges faced by SWDs when accessing higher education. It highlights the barriers they encounter during the admission and registration process, such as institutional processes that may hinder their entry into certain courses. By framing these barriers as work that students do in the process of institutionalisation, I reassert the agency of the actors at micro-level, often reified as data or numbers in university's strategic planning. This corroborates Devault's (2014) work that mapped the "invisible work" that people from the Deaf community do in hearing spaces. She argues that in hearing spaces, "they work much harder to be included as they have to be watching closely, making inferences, anticipating how they might be required to respond to others" (p. 781). While not the central focus, I also examine the roles of non-disabled students in supporting their peers with disabilities. Previous studies (Capp, 2017, Hackman and Rauscher, 2004, Mino, 2004) have primarily focused on how inclusive classroom is good for both disabled and non-disabled students, this study contributes to the literature by making a valuable contribution to discussions on peer support, empathy, and the roles of non-disabled students in creating an inclusive environment, especially in contexts where resources are lacking.

### *Pedagogy and Academic Cultures*

I have analysed how academic culture and pedagogical approaches within the university environment, can be exclusive and fail to accommodate students with disabilities. The critical examination of these areas provides a deeper understanding of how the academic culture can be unintentionally disabling and highlights areas for improvement. This was done by showing how certain professional cultures and pedagogical relations, such as the allocation of courses, classroom arrangement, teaching methods, and assessment approaches can unintentionally discriminate against students with disabilities. I demonstrate how these policies may perpetuate structural inequalities and the need for critical examination and reform.

### *Policy Research through a Decolonial Institutional Ethnography*

Most studies on disability inclusion in higher education in Nigeria, are quantitative and therefore lack the thick description of how things are put together and why universities in Nigeria have remained largely inaccessible to students with disabilities. Taking an institutional ethnographic approach to understanding this problem has shown that universities are willing to change but are caught in the ideological understanding of disability that is diffused through legitimised knowledge and practices. Using IE and decolonial theories has enabled me to connect the current understanding of ruling relations from being an extra-local consciousness of domination (Smith, 2005) with colonial matrix of power relations (Quijano, 2007) which operate across and within social organisations and units. I argue that the locus of enunciation (Grosfoguel, 2011) of disability inclusion and the idea of university education is still Eurocentric, thereby dictating thinking, saying, doing and being of inclusive education in the periphery.

Using IE as a materialist method of doing sociology with people, I was able to map how extra-local relations of inclusive higher education policy texts have ruled the experiential realities of students and support staff in universities in Nigeria. The shift I have been able to make through my engagement with the works of Dorothy Smith and other IE researchers, is to look not only at the authorial intentions of policies, but how people activate them, and how the 'occurring' of these texts coordinates what actors do within and across institutions. My theoretical and methodological framework establishes an epistemic dialogue between institutional ethnography as a feminist-inspired ontology and decolonial theories, a dialogue

which has largely been missing, with the exception of Rosabal-Coto (2016) in Costa Rica and Ugarte (2023) in a recent collection of critical commentaries on IE (Luken and Vaughan, 2023). With this lens, I have unravelled the colonial patterns of power that coordinate the production and consumption of inclusive education policies at the local and extra-local levels. I also took a multi-level analytical approach by looking at the roles of actors at micro, meso and macro levels in enacting policy in higher education institutions, while paying attention to the impact of institutional cultures or contexts of implementation in the policy process.

### *Sociological Intervention (SI)*

An initial preoccupation with my theoretical framework left me worried about the question of transformation and impact. As stated in chapter 3, I wanted to do a sociology that recognises and starts from, the colonial actualities of the people in the periphery, where their voices are preserved in the *order of things (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992)*. The transformation of this social condition is also on the agenda. This is why I have argued that IE needs to move from a sociology *for* people to a sociology *with* people. Rather than claiming that IE has preserved the subject's presence by taking a standpoint, "the institutional ethnographer must consider the role of symbolic violence in her or his own method of inquiry and develop a disposition toward reflexive intervention in their own construction of the world" (Walby, 2007 p. 1025). As I argued in chapter 8, sociological intervention offered me the avenue to empower my informants with the knowledge of how things are put together or organised, and the potentiality of their struggle to transform the system. Through SI, I was able to facilitate a dialogic impact where SWDs and FUA's principal officers could come together to evolve a path to social change.

### *Implications for Disability Inclusion in Africa*

For higher education in Africa to fully and truly embrace disability inclusion, it is essential for research and practices to consider what "inclusion" means and what ontologies and philosophies it draws on in non-western educational settings. It is on this note that this study theoretically argues the need to unbundle the philosophy (Brooks, 2013) of inclusion and that the sociology of disability inclusion policies should not only be public (Burawoy, 2005) but connected (Bhambra, 2014a) and must start from the actualities of people (Smith, 2005) in the Global South. This approach will not only increase awareness of diverse inclusive practices

and the underlying philosophies in various cultural contexts but also contribute to the goal of 'conceptual decolonization' of inclusion (Wiredu, 2002, 2008). The decolonial lens adopted in this thesis considers African philosophies such as Ubuntu Omolúàbí and Ujaama, which emphasise humanity, moral character, interdependence, and communalism in their potential to define original models of inclusive society. However, our critical stance also calls for further analysis of those concepts and their heuristic value to understand contemporary practices.

Translating these philosophies into educational policy and practice within the context of neoliberalism and globalisation poses a significant challenge, as evidenced in this study and Mutunga's (2023) work. One approach to addressing this challenge is to reconsider the potential of African philosophies such as Omoluabi in understanding the communal practices of African people as foundational to their knowledge culture (Shanyanana and Waghid, 2016). Conversely, as Wiredu has argued, the history of colonialism and the ongoing colonial matrix of power, knowledge and being have led to an overemphasis on foreign philosophical ideas, necessitating a process of "critical reconstruction" of philosophy relevant to contemporary existence (Wiredu, 2002). This implies that any African synthesis for modern living should involve a critical evaluation of indigenous, Western, and Eastern elements (Imafidon, 2021).

It is, therefore, necessary to shift from the view of inclusive education as a "whac-a-mole mechanism" to individual 'support needs' as seen in the Nigerian national policies for inclusion to one that demands responsiveness to diversity. Addressing educational exclusion as a driver of social exclusion in Nigeria requires viewing inclusive education as a comprehensive reform issue with implications for overall school development. Adopting this broader perspective involves examining and deconstructing the foundations of cultural biases, policies, and school practices to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, can participate and learn without facing exclusionary pressures. By deconstructing these barriers, we can envision a world where true equality of knowledge, philosophy, Being, and thought prevails and where human rights are universally upheld.

## 9.4. Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies

IE is a feminist-inspired method, built through the experience of women who have been marginalised and rendered invisible by mainstream sociology. As a sociology for people, the feminist remit has expanded to encompass every aspect of the social world, with an eye to power and how it affects people differently, depending on their positioning in the world. Drawing on this notion, I have followed other IE researchers in centring the experience of oppressed people and taking their standpoint – in this case, SWDs - as the point of entry into the social organisation of disability inclusion.

While my approach has been somewhat intersectional in that I took cognisance of other identities that might shape the experience of students with disabilities. As a male sociologist with a "settler innocence"(Tuck and Yang, 2012), I may have side-stepped or glossed over the feminist-focus of this method. Settling comfortably into this epistemic space, I can't claim that I have contributed to advancing the feminist ontologies on which this method was built. Similarly, my status as a visibly non-disabled person, researching disability experiences is uncomfortably illustrative of how texts, produced by experts like me, continue to erase and oppress the disabled community. I have also focused exclusively on the classical category of disabilities presented by FUA, ultimately neglecting other Othered high incidence disabilities like autism, dyslexia, dyscalculia, learning disabilities and even albinism.

My dual outsiderness has been a significant ontological and reflexive concern for me since the beginning of this research. I have often found myself asking "how do I know that?", when I have not lived the actualities being spoken about. I acknowledge that institutions have been made by and for people like me. Yet I still feel that this study does offer some push back in terms of contributing to the reconstruction of the social, where the so-called non-traditional or non-existent can thrive and belong. My interest at the beginning of this study was not to generalise policy enactment nor social organisation; this enabled me to engage in the thick description that characterises the case study, while at the same time noting how this case is connected to other cases and extra-local realities beyond the case. Opting for a holistic approach also shows that sample size and representation is not everything. My decision to

look at FUA in detail has generated the details and nuances that lead to an understanding of how things are put together elsewhere.

While time could have enabled a more comparative study between FUA and other universities I visited in this study, time is an obvious weakness of the sociological intervention I used to complement my research. Embedding SI in research that is not primarily designed to be a sociological intervention, departs slightly from the conventional way of doing SI. However, I have shown how the philosophy of SI can be added to research that is not primarily designed as an intervention and how IE and decolonial theories can prepare the ground for this intervention.

In supporting potential of transformation by using my knowledge to create a dialogue between SWDs and stakeholders, I also have to recognise both my authority and privileged position and the limitations of that authority. I cannot take credit for any change nor offer the certainty of change; the experience of SWDs could remain qualitatively the same. In their manifesto for "live methods" for sociology, Back and Puwar (2012) argue that case study methods are currently struggling with the 'trap of the now' where attention to the larger scale and longer-term are missing. They attribute this to the "forces of instrumentalism of academic culture and timidity within academic sociology" (p. 7). Live methods enable the sociologist the ability to "radically re-think, re-describe, re-imagine social dynamics". Like the tenets of SI and IE, live methods "involve immersion, time and unpredictable attentiveness, allowing for a transformation of perspectives that moves slowly over time, between fieldwork sites and the academy" (ibid p.13.). Also not discussed in this thesis is the influence of social movements on the transformation of higher education system for inclusion. As hinted by Sophia and Anthony, their activities in the university are connected to what PWDs do in their communities.

Another limitation pertains to my fieldwork. My account of students experience with JAMB was largely based on their reports and reports from the JEOG itself. This study could have been further enriched if I had had the opportunity to observe them to better strengthen my exploration of liminality. My efforts to secure an invitation to conduct observation during an examination was lost in the "institutional textual trail". This may indicate that JAMB is not

keen for outsiders to ask questions about its access policy until it takes shape, even though JEOG has now been operating for six years.

My use of the listening guide (Gilligan and Eddy, 2017) in combination with IE took off from the suggestions of Walby (2013) and Doucet (2018a). As a newcomer to IE, I believe I designed an ambitious methodological experimentation, demonstrating my willingness to break with disciplinary carapaces in order to understand the problem at hand. My analytical plan did not conform with those implemented by other users of LG and their end goals, but I believe that it did serve the purpose of this study. I take both solace and responsibility in Smith's argument that no two IE are the same. I am also encouraged by Gilligan and Eddy's acknowledgement (Gilligan and Eddy, 2017) that through being implemented in a range of contexts and for different purposes, LG has taken a path of its own. For example, I used composite accounts, where some identities and stories were reconstructed to serve a representative purpose but also to protect the anonymity of my participants. These accounts are quite selective when compared with number of interviews conducted.

Further studies could build a historical sociology of disability inclusion policies within the development of higher education, as this is lacking. The few studies (Ajuwon, 2017, Eleweke, 2002) have focused largely on provisions in secondary schools. Therefore, more knowledge is needed about the drivers of disability in higher education as a policy concern, especially post-world war and throughout the colonial period. I suspect this would strengthen my claim that Nigerian universities have thus far been "exclusive by design." The emergence of responsibilisation as a logic of inclusion, even if wrapped around Omoluabi or humanist philosophy, is another theme that warrants further investigation. For example, I would like to see how SWDs and non SWDs see and construct this relationship, and the mediating role of the university in the process.

Another potential focus would be on SWDs' educational outcomes, as this could shed light on the impact of policy enactment or the lack of it, on the performance and achievement of SWDs at FUA. I deliberately took a different direction, focusing on the transformation piece of my three-work model, because in my analysis, the fixing work emerged as a stronger theme than outcomes.

As rightly said by Smith (2005), the problem remains how to make what I have learned through this research more accessible, especially to SWDs who have made this study possible. At the end of this research journey, my role as an institutional ethnographer is to engage in further dissemination of the potentials of institutional ethnography, decolonial theories and sociological intervention as tools to empower the SWDs with the "skills to make visible the invisible that permeates the everyday work lives" (p. 220).

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**Appendix A: Observation Checklist**

**Objectives:**

• to observe participants as they engage in activities that would probably occur in much the same way if I was not present

• to engage to some extent in the activities taking place, to better understand the participants' perspective or so as not to call attention to myself

• to interact with participants socially outside of a controlled research environment, such as extracurricular activities.

• to identify and develop relationships with key informants and stakeholders.

| Categories | Components | What to note |
|---|---|---|
| **Appearance** | Physical appearance, clothing, age, gender, | Anything that might indicate membership in groups or sub-populations of interest to the study, such as position in the university, social status, socioeconomic class, religion, or ethnicity |
| **Language and Interactions** | Who speaks to whom and for how long; who initiates interaction; languages or dialects are spoken; the tone of voice | Gender, age, ethnicity, and position of speakers; dynamics of interaction. |
| **Physical Behaviour** | What students and staff do, who does what, who interacts | How students and staff use their bodies and voices to communicate; what individuals' behaviours indicate |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | with whom, who is not interacting | about their feelings toward one another, their social rank, or their profession |
| **Personal Space** | How close students stand or sit to one another; how close support staff stand or sit to students | What individuals' preferences concerning personal space suggest about their relationships |
| **Physical Space** | Sizes of rooms, distance to walk to desired destinations, the physical layout of the observation site | What objects are found in rooms, social spaces, and around the observation site? Are spaces conducive to the activities performed in them? |
| **Human Traffic** | People who enter, leave, and spend time at the observation site | Where staff and students enter and exit; how long they stay; who they are (ethnicity, age, gender); whether they are alone or accompanied; number of people |
| **Notable Behaviours** | Identification of students who receive a lot of attention from others | The characteristics of these individuals; what differentiates them from others; whether students consult them, or they approach other students; whether they seem to be strangers or well known by others present |
| | | |

Adapted from: Spradley, J. (1980). *Participant Observation*

## Appendix B: Observation at CBT Centre

- At about 8 am, students coming from different directions to the CBT centre. They have an 8 am exam. It is CHM 105, a 100 level course for science students. Some coming in tricycles from their hostels, parks and perhaps night classes. There is a long shield in front of the pavement leading to the centre. No bags are allowed in. Students only come with calculator, pens and a laminated paper called course form. Students are ushered in, screened and checked by male and female security officers. After this check, they then take seat according to their arrival to the order they have been screened in. Some students come with backpacks. They put them on the ground outside the centre at their own risks. The seating arena is bordered, you can't join the seats unless you have been screened. It has a blue roof shielding the backless seats provided. Male students on the left side, females join their mates on the right side of the pavilion. The seating arena has the same capacity. But the female side of the pavilion is already filled up. Making other female students to queue under the long tent outside the seating arena. As wearing a face mask is a requirement, all students came wearing a face mask while those who don't have had to buy from sellers who are sitting on the other side of the road facing the centre. It seems they have the university approval to shade their goods, or they were just exploiting the business opportunity of any busy location on campus. I later realised they are from villages surrounding the university. People who sell items on campus follow any activities where students are going to frequent, they follow them with their needed items, the shops where things are sold is far from the CBT centre, they must bring this to the proximity of the students. This arrangement could be seen in all hostel and class areas.
- Most students are dressed casually while conforming to the university's dress code. The CBT centre is not a place you dress anyhow to is the message I got. They are not ready to break the law of the university at their most critical time of writing an exam. Most of them wearing slippers. It is a hot weather I thought. T shirts of different colour and lengths. Females wore gowns, shirts and blouses mostly in cool and dark colours.
- After some ushering, the male side of the arena is now occupied to the maximum capacity.
- Some of the female students have been ushered into the exam hall, but the queue under the shade is still long. Those who are not ready for the exam were seen hanging around the centre sitting on pavements and blocks, standing and chatting about what they have read.
- The male students now forming a queue adjacent the female queue (The bursar talked to me about this shed when I interviewed him, and how the university strategic plan thought it wise to approve some amount of money to make provision for shelter for the students queuing to write exams)
- Yellow Tricycles still coming to drop students with their revving noise as they zoomed off for their next trips. The noise of the tricycles and students crowded outside the CBT centre make the whole examination area chaotic.
- I also observed a hand washing station for COVID 19 Sanitary precautions.
- I observed some male students discussing football. The Barcelona manager that has just been sacked. Discussing the English Premier League clubs' performance arguing about who should qualify for the next champions league. I watched as they talked about this issue with so much passion.
- They talked in Yoruba, English and Pidgin.
- The entrance to the centre has three main points, two sides for steps and the middle way is for Wheelchair users.

- At about 10mins to 9 am. The population has reduced. I heard a student asking if some of his colleague had written their exams. They are about 5000 students from various departments.
- A student told me the paper is between 8 - 9:30 am. the exam duration is about 1:30 minutes.
- I met some students after the exams.
- I met a lady who came for CBT re-sit. She had come earlier than stipulated. Her exam is at 1:30pm. She looked very tired and stressed. She is from Ogun state. She asked if I have eaten because she has not eaten. She is in 200 level Business Administration. I don't like this semester, she said. She said she was going back to the library to continue her reading.
- As I was waiting to speak to more students. I met Fola. She is a 100 level student. She is from Osun state. She stays off-campus too. She said her exam was fine. They have had the practical test before. The exam is 60% of the total grade. The practical test was 40 percent. She came from the city centre yesterday for night class to prepare for the exam. She has a friend in the hostel that stays on campus. Her name is Lola from Kogi state. They asked about me. What I am doing on campus. What I have done. Why did you choose the University? I asked. My dad! She said. Why did he? He thought the Uni has discipline. Dress code and all that. My dad wants me to come to a decent university. But things are not quite what I have heard about the Uni. It has changed a lot. My brother who is studying for an engineering course told me different things. Do you like it here? l asked. YES, I would say. Because of the calendar and you are able to finish on time.
- I met two boys after their exams. Kunle and Jibril, 100 level Agric students. Kunle is 21. He had stayed at home for 4 years wanting to get his preferred choice of course: Physiology. But he was cleared for Agric this year. He is keen to transfer to another department. He didn't enjoy the CBT exam. The lecturer only came to class once and he left because the class was making a noise. He had gotten some of his course materials online. He hadn't been able to attend the course online. The Zoom classes were always full. Kunle is from Lagos. Jibril is also from Lagos. He looked more petite than Kunle. Jibril said he was expecting theoretical questions. The question were practical scenarios.
- I spoke to a 200-level student from the EDU, she had just had a resit of CHM 115. She stays off-campus. Dressed in blouse and long skirt with a white scarf. She looked worried about the exams and uninterested to have a chat about it. Resitting for an exam on campus is a big stress, she said, it adds another layer of stress to what you are going through in your current level. Most students I met on campus have really lamented about make-ups and resits. Once you missed an exam or test, it is always tough to get the course done again, it is either you lay claim on medical reasons or carry over the course. The missed courses or failed courses are called carryovers. Common with carryovers are clashes, because you will always carry a course from a lower level, the exam timetables sometimes don't consider carry overs when designing the timetable, the might put the course you failed and a current course together on the same and at the same time. You can only go in group to the exam officer of your department to seek amendment when the provisional timetable is out. Students are not aware of why there is provisional, they thought it is to inform them of the exam dates and schedule alone, they don't know it is meant to be amended and they are the one to change it.
- Some students without the knowledge of how things work will go ahead to write the exams that way while others will seek help from level and advisers and people they know in the department to achieve a change.

**Appendix C: Interview Schedules**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (STAFF)**

Opening statement to Staff: Hello, my name is Abass. I'm going to talk with you about your daily works in the university. For example, I will ask you to tell me about your job responsibilities and the tasks you perform on campus. I will also ask you which tasks you enjoy doing and which tasks you find challenging. I will also want to know how you prioritise what you do. I am interested in hearing your thoughts and opinions about the supports you need and how those needs may be met. There are no right or wrong answers. You can choose not to answer any question at any time. Do you have any questions about how your responses will be used? Do you have any other questions about what we are doing here?

**Interview Questions for Support Staff and Academic Members**

| **Question Type** | **Questions asked and probes** |
|---|---|
| **Opening** | Question: Tell me about yourself.<br><br>Probe: Where are you from? How long have you lived here?<br><br>Question: How long have you worked here?<br><br>Have you always worked in your current role?<br><br>Probe: Have you worked with students with disabilities before? |
| **Introductory** | Question: What would you like to know about me and my research?<br><br>Probe: How do you feel about me being here? How do you think about participating in research? |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Transition** | Question: Tell me about your responsibilities. What types of activities is your shift responsible for?<br><br>Probe: Tell me more. What else do you do? |
| **Key** | Question: Tell me about how you prioritise your work with students with disabilities? How do you prioritise when to do it?<br><br>Probe: Who makes those decisions?<br><br>Question: Can you describe what you enjoy about your work?<br><br>Are there any challenges to your work?<br><br>Probe: What supports do you need? |
| **Summary** | Question: Based on what you have told me, it sounds like...Is that right?<br><br>Probe: Tell me more. |
| **Closing** | Question: Is there anything else you would like to tell me?<br><br>Probe: Tell me more. |

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES)**

Opening Statement to students: Hello, my name is Abass. I'm going to talk with you about your daily routines on and off-campus. For example, I will ask you to tell me what happens in

your hall of residence and your lecture halls. How do you find getting to the class daily? I will also ask you which activities you like and which activities you do not like. I also want to know how you decide on your course of study and when. I am interested in hearing your thoughts and opinions about the supports you need and how those needs may be met. There are no right or wrong answers. You can choose not to answer any question at any time. Do you have any questions about how your responses will be used? Do you have any other questions about what we are doing here?

**Interview Questions for students with disabilities**

| Question Type | Questions asked and probes |
|---|---|
| **Opening** | Question: Tell me about yourself? Probe: How old are you? What do you like to do? |
| **Introductory** | Question: What would you like to know about me? Probe: Do you remember our last conversation? |
| **Transition** | Question: Tell me about your day?<br><br>What happens in the morning? Afternoon? Evening?<br><br>Probe: What do you do after lectures?<br><br>Where do you do [named activity]?<br><br>Question: Where do you go around campus? Probe: What do you do at the [named locations]? |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Key** | Question: Tell me about some of your favourite things that you do during the day? Who do you do them with?<br><br>Probe: Do you feel supported by staff and fellow students on your course? How come? How does this support make you feel?<br><br>Question: Tell me about some of your least favourite things about your day? Probe: How come? How does that make you feel? |
| **Summary** | Question: Based on what you've told me, it sounds like…..Is that right? Probe: Tell me more. |
| **Closing** | Question: Is there anything else you'd like to tell me? Probe: Tell me more. |

Adapted from Johnson (2016); Daily life participation in a residential facility for adults with intellectual disabilities: an institutional ethnography

## Appendix D: Diary Sample

# How did your day go?

Dear Respondent,

I have designed this form to solicit diaries from you. I want to have an idea of your typical day, what you did, where you went, the people you met, and how you feel about today's activities on campus.

* Required

1. Tell me about your day *

2. What part of the day do you enjoy the most?

3. Did you go anywhere new?

4. Tell me about what you wished could have been better *

**Appendix E: HI Classroom Observation**

- The lecturer came in about 4:05 and asked about other students just coming from a lecture they just completed.
- There is no interpreter for Gabriel, I couldn't hear or see the board from where I was seated.
- The lecturer drew a diagram on a white board placed in front of a middle column. The lecturer's voice is very low. I noticed there is no Public Address System.
- He asked If the student could see what he wrote on the board. They chorused No!
- He changed his marker to a different one, but the ink of the "new" marker is low as well. I could see someone trying to make something work. For about 20 minutes, he had faced the white board solving a mathematical equation.
- He wore a blue shirt and a grey pant trousers. Most of the students in the hall are male. It is a physics class, I thought.
- Students were quiet and focused on the board.
- He asked if the students had been following, they chorused, "No sir!'
- He made an attempt to explain the equation on the board once again.
- "This is a 300-level class", he said. He talked to them with an assumption of expertise in the subject matter. He is teaching a mathematical theory.
- The room is sweltering. The windows were not made to work for cross ventilation. It was a design problem, I guessed. Before the class, Gabriel had used his phone to snap previous notes. The last class was virtual, as he told me.
- He informed the student about the flexibility of the formula he is using. He picked his tablet to verify the answer to the problem he has solved on the board.
- A student said, I can't see. After the lecturer has asked a question from the class. A student from Gabriel's department sought clarification on the formula being used.
- Gabriel looked confused but could not ask question, I saw he was eager to talk. He wanted to say something but could not communicate with the lecturer. He is seated in the first four rows before the lecturer.
- "I am not clear sir", a student said! "What is not clear?" The lecturer replied.
- Gabriel is the only deaf student in the class, as he mentioned.

- “Let’s work on this” is what he says anytime he tries to solve the equation on the board.
- “Nobody should ask me why I do this , unless you want to  go back to primary school"
- Students murmured in disagreement.

## Appendix F: Ethics Approval

| EDU ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER 2020-21 |
|---|

| APPLICANT DETAILS | |
|---|---|
| **Name:** | Abass Isiaka |
| **School:** | EDU |
| **Current Status:** | **PGR Student** |
| **UEA Email address:** | a.isiaka@uea.ac.uk |
| **EDU REC IDENTIFIER:** | **2021_06_AI_YL** |

| Approval details | |
|---|---|
| **Approval start date:** | **14.07.2021** |
| **Approval end date:** | **31.12.2023** |
| **Specific requirements of approval:** | |
| **Please note that your project is only given ethical approval for the length of time identified above. Any extension to a project must obtain ethical approval by the EDU REC before continuing. Any amendments to your project in terms of design, sample, data collection, focus etc. should be notified to the EDU REC Chair as soon as possible to ensure ethical compliance. If the amendments are substantial a new application may be required.** | |

*Victoria Warburton* EDU Chair, Research Ethics Committee

**Appendix G: FUA's Accessibility Audit**

| S/N | POINT | OBSERVATION(S) | PROPOSED INTERVENTION | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Entrances | Ramps provided and effective. | To be refurbished and handrails installed. | 3 handrails to be fixed and ramp refurbished. |
| 2. | Furniture | Seats not convenient for disabled to sit and not space for wheelchair users. | Last row of seats in the theatre to be removed. | 2 rows of seats at the rear to be removed. |

V.Cs. SPORTS COMPLEX. (Indoor Games Hall)

| S/N | POINT | OBSERVATION(S) | PROPOSED INTERVENTION | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Entrances | Stepped entrance. Not disable- friendly. | Ramps to be constructed at entrance points and drop-off. | 2no. ramps to be constructed. |
| 2. | Sports Hall | Stepped entrance. Not disable- friendly. | Steps to be cut off at the middle and a Ramp- below tunnel constructed with rails. | 1no. ramp tunnel constructed with rails. |

THE DEAF SUPPORT CENTRE COMPLEX.

| S/N | POINT | OBSERVATION(S) | PROPOSED INTERVENTION | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Entrances | Ramped provided but `1132highly inefficient and hazardous. No drop-off | Open Ramp case to be constructed and drop-off defined and constructed. | 1No. Ramp case and drop-off constructed to design. |
| 2. | Wing entrances | Stepped entrance. | Ramps to be constructed. | 2Nos. ramp without rails to be constructed. |

## Appendix H: Inclusive Education Policy Funding Strategy

1.4 THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

| S/N | STRATEGIES | KEY ACTIONS | SPECIFIC TARGETS | TIMELINE | ORGANISATION RESPONSIBLE | FUNDING SOURCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | High level sensitization and advocacy to enhance political will, acceptance and buy-in on inclusive education by all. | - Coordinate activities by involving relevant stakeholders in raising awareness through electronic, print and social media.<br>- Use of traditional/religious institutions and local means of information dissemination e.g. town criers, local town hall meetings and religious/traditional gatherings.<br>- Involvement of National Orientation Agency (NOA) in driving a strategic inclusive education orientation campaign<br>- Public enlightenment and campaign rallies in places with out-of-school children. For example, motor parks, markets and sundry places.<br>- Advocacy visits to specific MDAs, development partners and other non-state actors<br>- Advocacy visits to state and national legislative arms to initiate and follow through the passage of a legislation that will promote effective implementation of the inclusive education policy<br>- Sensitize parents and teachers/facilitators on the importance of inclusive education | - 37 ( 1 per state) comprehensive public awareness programmes on inclusive education implemented<br>- 5% decline on number of out of school children<br>- Enabling laws are in place | Annually | FME, SME, SUBEB, SBMC, Local Government Education Authorities | • FME, UBEC, SME, SUBEB<br>• UNICEF, USAID, DFID, UNESCO etc. |
| 2 | Effective stakeholders' engagement and community mobilization at Local, State, | - Stakeholder forum - to build partnerships, share information, take ownership, to draw up commitments and support for the implementation of the policy | - All Honourable Commissioners' of Education, SUBEB Chairs, all ESs and other key stakeholders have | Yearly | FME, SME, UBEC, SUBEB, | FME, SME, UBEC, SUBEB, DFID, USAID, UNESCO, UNICEF |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | National and International levels. | - Town-hall meetings at the grassroots level to create awareness on inclusion and drive implementation process<br>- Meetings with educators for awareness, advocacy, resource mobilization etc.<br>- Workshops to build capacity, to develop technical tools to implement inclusive education, monitoring tools and evaluation techniques<br>- Seminars to further build capacity and create knowledge based information sharing<br>- Roundtable meetings to review and monitor progress on the policy implementation<br>- Conferences at national and state level to share learning, experiences, knowledge and best practices | increased understanding, ownership, promotion and implementation of the national policy on inclusive education | | | |
| 3 | Regular Capacity-Building for all stakeholders. | - Training for Policy-Makers on the understanding of inclusive education policy and implementation techniques<br>- Training for school administrators/headteachers and other personnel on resource management to address inclusion, encourage production of learning and teaching materials at local levels, the importance of community mobilisation and participation to support inclusion and mentorship<br>- Training for CSOs, NGOs, FBOs, CBOs IDPs, and Media officers on understanding the concept of inclusive education, monitoring of the different activities, mobilise resources and advocacy<br>- Continuous training of Teachers/Facilitators on classroom management, pedagogic skills on addressing educational needs of individual learners etc. | - 100 Policy-Makers per state show a clear understanding of IE<br>- Increased capacity of 500 - (teachers, facilitators, administrators and other implementers of NPIE per state) on inclusive education<br>- Libraries established in all the mainstream schools in all the states | Yearly | FME, SME, UBEC, SUBEB | UNICEF, USAID, DFID, World Bank, UNESCO |